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THE MAN WHO KNEW COOLIDGE

Novels by Sinclair Lewis

OUR MR. WRENN
THE TRAIL OF THE HAWK
THE JOB
FREE AIR
MAIN STREET
BABBITT
MARTIN ARROWSMITH
MANTRAP
ELMER GANTRY
THE MAN WHO KNEW COOLIDGE

THE MAN WHO KNEW COOLIDGE

BEING THE SOUL OF LOWELL SCHMALTZ

*

SINCLAIR LEWIS

JONATHAN CAPE
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to

L. M. AND AGNES BIRKHEAD
AND EARL AND EVA BLACKMAN,
WHO, AS MUCH AS THE AUTHOR,
HAVE ADMIRED THE PHILOSOPHY
OF MR. LOWELL SCHMALTZ AND
OF HIS PASTOR

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THE MAN WHO KNEW COOLIDGE

PART I

THE MAN WHO KNEW COOLIDGE[1]

AND I certainly do enjoy listening to you gentlemen and getting your views. That's one of the nice things about being on a Pullman like this: you can guarantee that you'll meet a lot of regular he-Americans with sound opinions and ideas.

And now let me tell you: the way I look at these things –

I don't mean to suggest for one second that I've got any better bean than the plain ordinary average citizen, but I've given a whole lot of attention to politics and such matters and – In fact, strikes me that it's the duty of all the better-educated citizens to take an interest in the affairs of the State, for what, after all, as a fellow was saying to us at the Kiwanis Club the

[1] Mr. Calvin Coolidge was the President of the United States of North America from 1923 to 1929. He fulfilled many of the soundest American ideals, and he stands, along with the Ford motor-car, the Rev. Dr. William Sunday, and the *Saturday Evening Post*, as the symbol of his era.

other day – what is the Government but the union of all of us put together for mutual advantage and protection?

And me – why say, I read the political editorials in the *Advocate* – that's the leading paper in my town – Zenith – I read 'em like most folks read the sporting page. And as a result of all this, and certain personal information that I can't disclose the sources of, I've come to the firm conclusion –

Here's something maybe you gentlemen never thought of:

They can all say all they want to about how President Coolidge – good old silent Cal Coolidge! – isn't maybe as flashy as some of these statesmen. Maybe he isn't as much given to shooting off his mouth as certain other public figures that I could name. Maybe he isn't what my daughter would call so "Ritzy" –

And say, by golly it's beyond me where the young generation of to-day, taking them by and large, get all this slang that they pull. Why, here just the other day my daughter was talking to her brother, and Robby – that's the boy's name; only fifteen; three years

younger than his sister, but smart's a whip. There's certainly one up-and-coming kid, if I do say so.

Why say –

Now I never put him up to it, y'understand. The Lord knows I can afford to give him the best the land affords, at least to a reasonable extent, I mean as much comfort and even luxury as is good for him. I'd never made a peep about how maybe it'd be a good stunt for him to go out and maybe earn a little money on the side. But he comes in one evening just before supper – before dinner-time, with his hat on one side of his head, looking proud as Punch.

So I says to him, "Well, Robert Livingston –"

As a matter of fact, his middle name isn't Livingston at all, it's Otto, but we often call him Robert Livingston, jokingly.

"Well, Robert Livingston," I says to him, "who do you think you are? Thomas Edison or Napoleon or somebody? Or maybe Red Grange![1] Sit down, Mr. Grange, and let me hang up your hat."

[1] A professional athlete renowned *circa* 1926.

You know, jokingly.

Well, he just looks at me –

I'm afraid if the truth were known the kid is pretty gosh-awful fresh, but he's so darn' cute about it that you can't get sore at him, the darn' little cuss – just as up-and-coming as I was at his age. He just stands and looks at me and sticks his hands in his pants-pockets, and then –

Say, what do you think he went and done? He put a record on the Rectophone.

You know – that's this new kind of phonograph that reproduces every tone of the human voice or music. It's some kind of new scientific invention that for a long time the scientists couldn't ever achieve it. But they got it now so they don't miss any of these undertones – or overtones or whatever it is – that they used to miss by earlier methods of reproduction. It costs a lot more than the old-fashioned phonograph, but way I look at it, the best is the cheapest in the long run.

Well, Robby, the little rascal, he goes to work and puts on a record, something about "I may have been a private in the A.E.F., but believe me, I'm a general with the dames." Then he

says, "Dad," he says, "in me you behold the feline's *robe de nuit*. I've gone and –"

Mind you, 's I said, I'd never even suggested to him that he get a job out of school-hours and earn a little money. I most certainly do believe that it's a mighty fine thing for a boy to do a little work, no matter how well fixed his folks are, and learn the value of money; learn how doggone hard it is to sneak up on ole Mr. Dollar and get a strangle-hold on him.

I swear, a lot of the young folks to-day seem to think the Old Man is simply made of money and don't have to sweat for every cent he makes. But same time, I hadn't figured it was time yet to explain this to Robby, though maybe that was a mistake on my part, and if it was, I'm perfectly willing to admit it – confession is good for the soul, as they say.

Maybe I should have drummed it into him long ago. I've got it on mighty straight inside information – in fact one of my best friends is acquainted with a man who knows the Rockefellers intimately – and he tells me that the Rockefellers,[1] people with all their jack, they

[1] First of the American ducal families.

bring their families up to be just as careful of money as any of us: *they* don't let their kids run away with the notion that it don't take any trouble to collect the dough.

Well, this gentleman related a significant little incident regarding the Rockefellers that he heard personally. Seems he was right there at the time. Here was old John D., probably with half the money-kings in the world waiting to see him, talking to young John D., just as simple and quiet as any one of us. And he said, and I've never forgotten his words – in fact I repeated them to Robby that day – the old gentleman looked at young John D., and prob'ly, I imagine, he put his hand on his shoulder, and he looked at him and said, "*My boy, waste not, want not!*"

Yes, sir!

But anyway –

I'm afraid I'm getting a little off the subject of Coolidge, and if there's anything I hate it's a fellow that, if he starts to talk about a subject, he can't stick to it.

I remember one time we had one of these book-authors speaking at the Kiwanis Club, and

say, that fellow, maybe he could write all right (though at that I'd like to see him sit down and dictate a letter to some fellow that would make him pay his account and yet not make him get sore!) – and as I say, I don't know anything about his writing, but when it came to *talking*, why say, he wandered all round Robin Hood's barn! Shows what a lack of business-training does to these fellows that think they're so gosh-awful smart and superior!

Well, as I say, Robby puts this record on the Rectophone – and that's an instrument you gentlemen certainly want to try – and he looks at me, and he says, "Well, Dad, I've got me a job in Zabriskie's Drug Store for Saturday afternoons, and I draw down one and one-half bucks for each and every said same!"

Pretty good, eh? I'll say it is! And him only fifteen.

But what I started to say was: The way that kid and his sister torture the English language to death just about gets my goat. Here him and his sister was talking one time, and he starts kidding her about some bird she was sweet on, and he says, "That guy's all wet."

But she come back at him, quick's a flash, Yeh, he's wet like a Methodist Sunday School!"

Yes, sir, it beats the cars how this new generation takes the Queen's English like you and I was brought up to speak it in the good old-fashioned schools where there was some thoroughness and discipline and not just a lot of these flashy fads, and they just practically ruin it; and as I was saying, if Sister – that's what we often call my daughter – if *she* was talking about Coolidge, she'd probably say he wasn't "Ritzy."

Well, if you want to look at it that way, all right. Maybe he isn't as highfalutin as some people I could name. But I wonder if any of you gentlemen ever thought of this?

He may not shoot off a lot of fireworks, but do you know what he is? He's SAFE!

★

Yes, sir, Cal is the President for real honest-to-God Americans like us.

There's a lot of folks that pan him, but what are they? You can bet your sweet life he isn't popular with the bums or yeggs or anarchists or highbrows or cynics –

I remember our pastor saying one time, "A cynic is a man who sneers, and a man who sneers is setting himself up to tell God that he doesn't approve of God's handiwork!" No, sir! You can bet Coolidge ain't popular with the Bolsheviks or the lazy boob of a workman that wants fifteen bucks a day for doing nothing! No, sir, nor with the cocaine fiends or the drunkards or the fellows that don't want the prohibition law enforced –

Not that I never take a drink. What I say about prohibition is:

Once a law has been passed by the duly elected and qualified representatives of the people of these United States, in fact, once it's on the statute books, it's *there*, and it's there to be enforced. There hadn't ought to be any blind pigs or illegal stills. But same time, that don't mean you got to be a fanatic.

If a fellow feels like making some good home-brewed beer or wine, or if you go to a fellow's house and he brings out some hootch or gin that *you* don't know where he got it and it isn't any of your business, or if you have a business acquaintance coming to your house and you

figure he won't loosen up and talk turkey without a little spot, and you know a good dependable bootlegger that you can *depend* on, why, then that's a different matter, and there ain't any reason on God's green earth that *I* can see why you shouldn't take advantage of it, always providing you aren't setting somebody a bad example or making it look like you sympathized with law-breaking.

No, sir!

But now to come down to the point of my story, I hope to be able to give you gentlemen an agreeable little surprise.

I know Coolidge personally!

Yes, sir; in fact I was a classmate of his! Sure as I'm telling you! I'll give you gentlemen an inside view of him, not only as I saw him in college, but as I've studied him at the White House!

When I say I was a classmate of his –

Well, the fact is that certain unfortunate family circumstances, that I needn't go into and that wouldn't interest you, prevented me from completing my college course –

My father, and a fine, upstanding, cultured

gentleman of the old school he was, too, always ready with a helping hand for any mortal that needed it, a man of A1 standing in his community - Fall River, Mass., that was; in fact, I was born and brought up in Fall River, which is, as you may know, one of the most beautiful and enterprising and go-ahead communities in the fair State of Massachusetts—he was, in fact, the leading corn and feed merchant in all his section of Fall River.

But I'm afraid he put a little too much confidence in the advice of an alleged friend.

Fact is, he invested his savings in a perpetual motion machine company that had little or no value. He died, and it was quite sudden, in December of my Freshman year, so I had to go back home and take up the burden of helping support the family.

But I certainly got a lot of value out of even that comparatively short time at Amherst, and the fellows at the Kiwanis Club tell me that they can see certain educational advantages in the quality of such speeches or motions as I may be called upon to deliver at the club, and welcomes to the speakers.

So it was at college that I was able to get an inside view of Cal Coolidge that has maybe been denied to even his more intimate associates in these later busy years when he has been so engrossed in the cares of the nation.

I don't suppose I could have been called one of Cal's closest friends in college, but I knew him pretty well. In fact, we lived not far from each other, and I used to see him frequently. I'll admit that I never had any notion that he'd climb to his present high position and international and historical fame, but even in those days you could see from the way he worked, and the way he looked at a thing from all sides before he went off half-cocked, that in whatever department of life he might choose, he would make his mark. And the next time you hear one of these birds criticizing Coolidge, you just tell 'em *that*, will you, from one who knew him in the days when he wasn't surrounded with adulations!

I can remember just's well as if it was yesterday, Cal and me happened to come out of a class together, and I said, "Well, it's going to be a cold winter," and he came right back, "Yep."

Didn't waste a lot of time arguing and discussing! He knew!

And another time: I never could get along any too good in Latin. My talent, you might say, is more along practical lines. I asked Cal – we happened to be going into class together, and I asked him, "Say, what's the Latin for 'defy'?"

"Don't know," he said. No beating around the bush and pretending and four-flushing, but coming right out with it, bang! That's the kind of man he is, you take it from one who *knows* him!

Yes, sir, I knew the boy and had the greatest affection and respect for him, like all of us who had the rare opportunity of *understanding* him!

And to think that I might not have gotten acquainted with him if we hadn't been chums together in one of the smaller colleges!

I tell you gentlemen, the way I figure it: the great, you might say the invincible advantage of the smaller educational institutions is that they throw the boys together in such intimate contact and – as Dr. Frank Crane[1] says in one of his pieces somewhere – they provide that

[1] A clergyman, often known, about 1927, as "the Christian Voltaire of America."

close knowledge of human beings which fits a boy for supremacy in the future walks and struggles of life. That's been my experience.

Still, same time –

These great modern universities, with their laboratories and stadiums and everything – They do have an advantage; and fact is, my son is preparing to enter the state university.

But anyway:

*

Naturally, considering that I had the privilege – through no virtue of my own, mind you – of being in my modest way rather chummy with Coolidge, I've watched his rise to world-wide fame with peculiar interest, and after he became President I often said to my wife, "By golly, I'd like to see the boy and just shake hands with him again."

Not, mind you, because he was President. After all, I've reached a position where I'm just as independent as the other fellow. An American citizen doesn't have to bow down and kowtow to anybody, whether it be the President or a millionaire or Queen Marie of Bulgaria or anybody –

By the way, Queen Marie made quite a stay at Zenith. She stopped over pretty near an hour between trains, and say, we certainly gave her a good time. The mayor read her an address and presented her with a gold-mounted polished cow's-foot combination ink-well, thermometer, and daily text calendar that I'll bet she's showing the folks in her palace right now. But I mean:

It wasn't because he was President, as I explained to the wife, but –

"Besides," I said to her, "just between you and me, I bet it would give the boy a real kick, after having to associate with ambassadors and generals and Frank Kellogg[1] and all those high-up guys, to be able to let down for a minute and shake the mitt of a fellow that he used to laugh and joke with in the old care-free days before we both assumed the responsibilities of our present careers."

So here about six months ago, when we were planning to take a little trip to New York –

I had to go to New York to look over a new mimeographing machine. You see, I'm in the

[1] A former American cabinet minister.

office-supply business, and let me tell you gentlemen that though I'm the first to respect other professions, though I honour the surgeon who can snatch you from the very gates of death, the lawyer who can so brilliantly argue your case – though personally I always think it's better to settle out of court – or the great banker or department-store owner, yet in all fairness let me put this to you:

Who is it that enables these gentlemen to do business and get their great ideas across in an up-to-date, efficient, time-saving manner? Who is it but the office-supply man! Yes, sir, I'm proud of my profession, and as a matter of fact I have the honour of representing the office-supply category in our great Zenith Kiwanis Club!

Just take filing-cabinets alone!

I always say, and sometimes the boys laugh at me at the Athletic Club, but good-naturedly, because I've got as fine a lot of friends as anybody I know, and believe me, I'm mighty good and proud of them, and I tell 'em, "Boys," I say, "excuse me if I get flowery, but you must always remember I'm a great reader of Colonel Bob Ingersoll – though I'm the first to depre-

cate the unfortunate religious ideas and scepticism that marred that otherwise great philosopher and public speaker – and probably it's from him that I got the idea of talking without having to resort to cheap and vulgar phrases, besides being a college man and –

"Excuse me if I get highfalutin," I often say to them – you know, at lunch at the Athletic Club – you know how a lot of fellows will get to reminiscing and chewing the rag when maybe they ought to be beating it back to their offices and getting on the job, but –

"Maybe you think I'm getting kind of woozy about it," I tell 'em, "but to me the beauties of modern filing-systems, which enable a man to instantly and without the least loss of time or effort find a letter on which, perhaps, depends the closing of an important deal, is in its practical way, to say nothing of the physical appearance of modern up-to-date filing-cabinets, no longer mere wooden boxes, but whether in steel or fireproofed wood, the finest example of the cabinet-maker's art and imitating perfectly the rarest woods – To me," I often tell them, "these filing-systems are in every way as beautiful as

the poet's song, as the flush on the maiden's cheek when she first hears the first whispered words of love, or the soft chirp of the mother bird at eveningtide, chirping to her birdlings. Yes, sir, you bet your sweet life they are, and you can laugh all you want to!"

So as I say, I had to go on to New York to look over –

I usually do my buying in Chicago, but this was a new caper that the wholesalers in Chicago hadn't got hold of yet. I'd been working pretty hard, and my wife was kind of a little run down from the after-effects of the flu –

And say, God, what a curse *that* is! I wonder if you gentlemen ever stopped to think that though the flu is in each individual case so much less fatal than diseases like the plague or brain-fever, yet considering the *number* of those afflicted with it – and after all, when you look at a subject, you've got to go into the statistics of it – of course naturally an office-supply man has great advantages that way, being in the business – When you think how *many* folks get flu, it seems like one of the most important of all diseases.

I tell you, I'm as religious as the next fellow, and I never'd for one moment dream of criticizing the preachers' doctrines – let them figure out theology and religion, I say, and I'll stick to the office-supply business. But don't it sometimes almost make you question the workings of Providence when you see the mysterious way in which disease smites down the just with the unjust?

Why, my wife went on snivelling and subject to constant headaches for more than six weeks after the doctor *said* he'd got her all cured of the flu!

So I said to her, "Honey," as I often call her, "what say you and me and Delmerine –"

Delmerine, that's my daughter's name. Don't know, by the way, that I've introduced myself. Lowell Schmaltz is my name –

Funny! Whole lot of people take Schmaltz for a German name, but of course, as a matter of fact, when you look into the matter, it isn't German at all but Pennsylvania Dutch, which is almost the same as saying New England Yankee and –

Well, I figured Delmerine could get away all right, because she's finished high school.

I'd asked her if she wanted to go to college – I could perfectly well afford to send her, of course – but she thought it over and she felt more kind of called to the musical line, and she was taking vocal and piano. But I figured she could drop them all right for a few days and I said –

Robby (that's my son), of course he couldn't get away, because he was in school, but –

I says to my wife, "Mamie, how'd it strike you – I've simply got to go to New York on a business trip and things are kind of slack now, and how'd it be if Delmerine and you went along and saw the sights and everything?"

Say, she was tickled pink! She'd never seen New York, and of course –

Not that I'd want to live in the Big Burg. What I always say is: New York is a swell hang-out for a few days' visit, and theatres and all like that, but when it comes to living there – say, I wouldn't live there if they gave me Times Square and threw in Riverside Drive to boot. Compared with Zenith –

And believe me, gentlemen –

I don't believe in going around boosting your own burg all the time. I don't suppose Zenith is

any better, practically, than Minneapolis or Cincinnati or Pittsburgh, say. But it certainly is one high-class city, and you may or may not know that not only do we lead the world in the manufacture of loud speakers and overalls, but we have, since Lindbergh's trans-oceanic flight, made all the plans and raised quite a lot of the money to construct the largest and finest flying-field between Chicago and New York, excepting Detroit and Dayton, of course, and we plan to have a restaurant at the aerodrome there serving short-orders twenty-four hours a day.

And I must say Mamie and I are pretty well fixed there. Believe me, we don't have to travel to get any ideas how to live! Just a couple of years ago I finished building a dandy little Italian villa-style bungalow, with a Spanish mission entrance. We've got two bathrooms, and a fireplace, and everything fixed up first-rate, and in the basement I've installed an electric washing-machine and a garbage-incinerator, and we got something that you don't find in many houses: in both bathrooms I've got a slit in the wall, right by the stationary bowls, for the disposal of safety-razor blades.

And say! I've got a great plan. Some day I'm – I am, by golly, no kid! – sounds crazy, but it'd be the greatest luxury you gentlemen ever heard of; just think, when you were taking a nice, long, lazy hot bath; some day I'm going to put a radio in my bathroom! But that's an ideal to be worked out in the future. Maybe it'll be my contribution to American progress. But still, let that pass, for the moment. As I say, we don't live so bad.

And of course I drive a Chrysler myself and I gave my wife a Chevrolet coop –

Say, I certainly got a rise out of her. She's one darn' nice little woman, if I do say so; been an A1 wife in every way, even if she does kick a little sometimes about my driving too fast. Well, here her last birthday I come home and I could see she was mouching around skittish as a wasp, because 'most always on her birthdays I've got something tucked inside my pocket for her.

"Do you know what day this is?" I finally says to her, after I'd looked over the paper and listened in on the radio a little – though I remember there wasn't anything on then except

the daily stock-receipt reports from the Omaha packing-yards.

She brightens up and tries to look kittenish and makes out like she doesn't know, and she says, "No, what?"

"It's the day – or it will be the evening – of the Kid Milligan-Pooch Federstein fight, and we better invite in some of the folks and listen to the fight on the radio," I says.

Well, sir, the poor kid, she certainly did look awful' down in the mouth. I didn't know whether she was going to be plucky, or whether she'd bawl me out – I got to admit she does sometimes. But she was game and didn't say anything, and pretty soon, 'long about fifteen, maybe twenty minutes, I suggested we go out and have a little walk before dinner. Well, meantime, you get me, I'd had the fellow bring this Chevrolet coop around and park it right in front of the house.

"Here's a nice little car," I says when I sees the Chev. "Wonder how she runs."

And I goes and gets in and starts it!

Well, sir – You know how women carry on. She cusses me out, and she beefs, and she gets

on a rampage, and she says, "Why, Lowell Schmaltz," she says, "what do you mean! What'll the owner say?"

"I'll bet he'll do a lot of saying," I laughs, "if he – or she – happens to see me in it!"

"Why, I never *knew* you to do a thing like that!" she says. "You get right out of that car!"

Say, I had her wild!

"So that's how a fellow gets treated, is it?" I says, and I pretend to look hurt, and I gets out, and then I draws her attention to a little card that I'd had tied on the door handle – 'd tied it on myself, matter of fact – that said, "To Mamie on her birthday from Woofums" – Woofums – kind of a nut name, but that's what she calls me sometimes when we're kind of fooling around.

Say, maybe she didn't pretty nearly keel over!

Yes, sir, you bet, both of us have our own cars, though mine –

It ain't the fault of the Chrysler itself, I'm certain of that, certainly a high-grade A1 machine, but the garage got to fooling with it,

and my car's got a squeak in it somewhere that I, by golly, simply can*not* locate; and say, if there's anything gets me wild when I'm driving –

I can stand the big gaff. Why say, when I had a tyre blow out on me after only two thousand miles (any of you gentlemen ever try the Melps tyre? Well, don't, that's my advice to you, and believe me, I know; I've tried two of them, and in my opinion this monkey-business they advertise about wrapping the fabric crosswise, or whatever it is, is all the bugs; don't get the result they claim at all) –

I can stand those big things, but say, even the littlest squeak, why say, it simply drives me crazy when I'm driving.

Why, here just last Sunday I was driving the family out to a cousin of ours that lives in Elmwood for Sunday dinner, and it was as fine a day as you ever saw, but just about the time I began to enjoy myself, and I was going past the Seven Corners and looking at the new filling-station they got there – say, man, I'll bet that's one of the finest filling-stations in the United States: twelve pumps they got, and a comfort station

fixed up to look like an old-fashioned log cabin, and a supply store with a great big huge enormous fish-aquarium simply chuck-full of goldfish right in the window. And geraniums.

And just when I was calling it to Mamie's attention – by golly, all of a sudden that squeak started again.

Well, say, I couldn't enjoy anything all day. After dinner, I took Cousin Ed out for a drive, to see if he could locate the squeak, and we drove right down through a wood, a park they got there, mighty pretty and I'd 've enjoyed it like the dickens – I always was a great believer in Nature – but every time I looked at a tree or a nice rustic-style bench or something like that, that darn' squeak would start in again, and Cousin Ed – he thinks he's such a wiz at cars, but Lord love you, he couldn't locate that squeak any more'n I could.

*

But's I say: I guess we're about as well fixed as most folks and we certainly don't have to get away from home to enjoy ourselves, but when I said to my wife, "I kind of got an idea you and Delmerine might come along with me and give

New York the once-over," she looked like somebody'd left her a million dollars.

And Delmerine she just hollers, "Oh boy! I'll give those Manhattan cabarets a look at a live one for once!"

"And we might stop at Cousin Walter's in Troy, on the way," I says.

"Oh no, let's not," says my wife.

"But we *got* to go there! Ain't Cousin Walter living there?" I says.

"Well, what of that?" she says. "Haven't you and he always hated each other?"

"Well, maybe we have," I says, "but he's a *relative*, ain't he? And when you travel you got to look up your relatives, ain't you?"

Well, make a long story short, we decided to stop at Cousin Walter's for a few days – and then – man! – then I springs the big surprise!

"And after New York," I says, "we'll come home by way of Washington, and we'll step in and call on the President!"

"Oh, Papa, we couldn't do *that*!" Delmerine hollers.

"I'd like to know why not!" I says. "Ain't he and I classmates?"

"Yes, but maybe he wouldn't remember you," she says.

"Now you look here!" I says. "If you think for one moment that I wasn't just as important in college as he was, and maybe then some – they told me if I could have stayed till spring I'd 've been in the baseball team – But that isn't the point! Let me tell you right now that words like that are an insult not to me, my fine young lady, but to the Great Executive himself!

"What is it that more than any other one quality distinguishes leaders of men like Cal? It isn't merely his profound thought, his immovable courage, his genial and democratic manners, but it's the fact that he's so close a student of human nature that he quickly but thoroughly studies each man as he meets him, and so never *can* forget him! Understand now," I says to them, "I understand that the President is one of the busiest men in the country, what with having to sign documents, and shake hands with delegations of Elks, and so on, and I certainly don't intend to intrude, but we'll just drop in and give him a pleasant surprise – think

how many years it is since we've seen each other! – and just shake hands and pass on. And you'll be able, Delmerine, to tell your grandchildren that once you heard the voice of Calvin Coolidge!"

Well, of course, when I made it clear, they were tickled to death at the prospect, and so we started making plans – personally I was for just taking some suit-cases along, but my wife held out for the black trunk, and I must say – I'm always the first to admit it when I'm licked, and Mamie certainly won that time! – she pointed out I'd have to have my dress-suit in New York and it wouldn't get wrinkled in a wardrobe trunk – and now say, while we're speaking of that, I'll bet it's struck you gentlemen as it has me: there's one of the highest-class and most significant of modern inventions that do so much to make life happy, the wardrobe trunk, and what a lot it adds to ease of travel and seeing the world, yes sir, she sure won that time and –

And just then –

Say, isn't it funny how a fellow will remember comparatively unimportant details even at a critical time! Happened just then that Robby

– that's my son, he's only fifteen, and the little cuss had started smoking; seems like I'd done everything I could to make him stop, but he's such a cute little beggar the way he comes back at you when you try to bawl him out that I never could get a word in edgeways. Well, he comes in –

And besides, I must say I still ain't sold on the idea of cigarettes.

I think I can with justification call myself what you might call a modern, up-to-date liberal man. I was the first fellow in my neighbourhood to put in a radio, and I never did believe they ought to have hung Sacco and Vanzetti if they were innocent. But when it comes to smoking, I still prefer a pipe or a good cigar.

But's I was saying, he comes in smoking a cigarette, and Delmerine – that's my daughter, a girl that I want to tell you gentlemen can in my judgment sing just as good right this minute as Schuman-Heink or Sophie Tucker or any of these famous prima donnas – and she hollers at him, "Say, Dad's going to take us to see President Coolidge."

And he says, "Gee, whiz! Are you going to give him enough warning so he can get away?"

Well say, maybe I didn't light into him then! I believe in giving kids their freedom, but I've told Robby time and time again that it's nice language and nice manners that enable a fellow to get along in this world, and if he'd study his mother and me a little more instead of a lot of these smart-aleck cigarette-sucking high-school fraternity yahoos, he'd be a lot better off! You bet! Every time!

Well, so we decided to go and got started. I don't want to bore you gentlemen with a lot of details of our trip. Of course what you want to hear about is the inside glimpse of Coolidge and the White House that I was privileged to have. So I'll cut it short and come right down to the real meat of the story.

*

So we got off on the noon train in about a week and – Say, it certainly is remarkable, ain't it, the conveniences of railroad travel to-day – in America, I mean, not abroad. A fellow that knows every inch of Europe was telling me there ain't a what you might call really comfort-

able train in the whole length and breadth of the Old Country. But here –

There I sits in the club car, with every convenience and luxury – soft drinks (personally I always find the Loganberry Highball the best drink on a Pullman) – and soft drinks to be had just by touching a button, and a regular library of free magazines and everything, especially the *Saturday Evening Post*, which is, taking it by and large, my favourite magazine, especially the advertisements, now that they've taken to printing 'em in colours.

Say! they can keep their old masters; give me some of these advertisements!

Yes sir, it's wonderful what strides advertising has made these last few years. Of course I admire the really great and leading American authors – Mrs. Rinehart and Peter B. Kyne, and Arthur Brisbane[1] – but I doubt if even they can touch the fellows that get up these advertisements nowadays. And it was a mighty bright idea – I don't know who started it, but this idea of working in a girl with pretty legs

[1] Three distinguished writers of fiction of the first quarter of the twentieth century in America.

in all sorts of ads; not only stocking ads, but auto ads, showing her climbing into a car; and machinery, showing her giving it the North and South, and so on. Yes sir, a fellow that wants to understand the United States, all he has to do is to study the *Saturday Evening Post* ads, and he'll see why we're the most advanced nation in the world, and the most individual.

There's a lot of sorehead critics of America that claim we're standardized, but –

Well, to take an example, let me take – well, just for an example let me take the fellow that I happened to be lunching with before I caught this train – just take the differences between him and me. We both belong to the Athletic Club, we both belong to service clubs, we have our places of business in the same block, we live within a quarter of a mile of each other, we both like golf and a good lively jazz on the radio. And yet this fellow and me – his name is Babbitt, G. F. Babbitt, fellow in the real estate game – we're as different as Moses and Gene Tunney.[1]

[1] Another celebrated athlete, much influenced by G. Bernard Shaw.

Where these poor devils of Europeans are crushed down and prevented from having their characters developed by the wide and free initiative so characteristic of American life, George and me can be friendly, yet as different –

Well, like this, for instance: I drive a Chrysler, and Babbitt doesn't. I'm a Congregationalist, and Babbitt has no use whatsomever for anything but his old Presbyterian church. He wears these big round spectacles, and you couldn't hire me to wear anything but eyeglasses – much more dignified, *I* think. He's got so he likes golf for its own sake, and I'd rather go fishing, any day. And – and so on. Yes sir, it's a wonderful thing how American civilization, as represented, you might say, by modern advertising, has encouraged the, as a speaker at the Kiwanis recently called it, free play of individualism.

But as I say –

Make a long story short, we got to Cousin Walter's at Troy all right, and on to New York –

But say, Walt certainly did entertain us in fine style – I got to thinking he wasn't such a bad

cuss after all. And he's got a new house that, and I'm the first to admit it, is just as modern as mine is! A modern homey home! Vacuum cleaner and gas clothes-drier and one of these new noiseless electric refrigerators –

Man, what a convenience that is! I never could understand why they make so much fuss over Babe Ruth[1] or even a real scientific pioneer like Lindbergh, when we haven't yet done anything to boost the honest-to-God master genius that invented the electric refrigerator.

Think of what it'll do! Give you every sort of frozen dessert! Get rid of the iceman that tracks mud on the back porch! Provide ice-water so you can have a refreshing drink night or day! What I always say is: these fellows can have their big libraries, their blinking art galleries, their private pipe organs, their rose gardens, but when it comes down to the *practical* things that make home an inspiration and solid comfort to a real family, give me an electric refrigerator!

And I got to admit that Walt's radio shades mine just the least little bit. And there's mighty

[1] Another professional football player.

few things that indicate a fellow's social rank and progress better than his radio.

And what an invention *that* is! *What* an invention! Talk about miracles –

Just think of it! Here you sit at home in the ole over-stuffed chair, happy as a clam at low tide (or is it high tide? – whichever it is). You sit there and smoke your pipe and twiddle the knob and what do you get? *Think* of it! Right there at home you hear the best jazz music in the country, bands in the best hotels in Chicago, and that wonderful orchestra at Zion City! All the hockey matches right while they're going on! Jokes by the best comedians in the country –

Say, I heard a crackajack over the radio the other day. Seems there was a couple of fellows sitting chinning in a Pullman, just like we are. "Haven't I met you in Buffalo?" one fellow says to the other, and the other says, "I've never been in Buffalo," and the first fellow says, "Neither have I – must've been a couple o' other fellows!"

Yes sir! and then think of the instructive lectures you get on the radio – why say, just the

other night I heard that in the eye of the ordinary house-fly there are several thousand, I think it was, separate lenses. Ever know that?

And then the sermons on Sunday morning. Why, that alone would make the radio one of the most world-revolutionizing inventions the world has ever known.

I tell you, it gives a real spiritual uplift to a poor devil that all week, excepting maybe at the Kiwanis lunch, he's had to toil and moil amid the dust of busy affairs and forget higher things. You bet! I'll never forget one sermon that I wouldn't ever 've heard if I hadn't had the radio, it being 'way off in Youngstown, Ohio – Reverend Wayo on how he didn't want to say that every atheist was a bootlegger, but you could bet your sweet life every bootlegger was an atheist!

Cute idea for a sermon, eh? and –

Yes sir, there's never been anything that makes for sound internationalism, nothing that combats the destructive and malign propaganda of the Bolsheviks and pacifists and all like that, like the radio, and personally I class it right in

with card-catalogues as an inspiration to the New Era.

So as I say, Walt's radio was every bit as good as mine, and we had some dandy drives around Troy and a big beer party Sunday evening – the only evening we stayed up late – I was mighty glad to find that Walt still kept regular hours and turned in about ten.

I tell you there never was a truer saying than "Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise" – I've certainly found it true in my own case – and we drove out for a few rounds of golf –

Now you take golf. By golly, if anybody'd told me fifteen years ago that I'd be out on the links chasing a little white pill around, I'd 've told 'em they were crazy, but let me tell you, I found one of the best ways to get acquainted with customers was to play round with 'em, and I saw what a mossback I'd been, and I've got so I like the game itself a good deal – take like my playing there at Troy even when I wasn't making any valuable contacts – and even though the weather was pretty chilly and –

Seems to me that on the whole the weather

has gotten warmer than it used to be when we were kids. You read in the papers how it hasn't changed materially, but they can say what they want to, don't you remember how doggone cold it used to be mornings when we had to get up and chase off to school, and now it seems like we don't have any more old-fashioned winters – maybe that's one reason why the kids to-day aren't as self-reliant as we were –

But to get back to my subject. As I say, I certainly did enjoy my stay with Walt as I hadn't expected to, especially his stories, and inside information about the War, he was a lieutenant in the quartermaster's corps at Camp Devon –

You know, there's a lot of false ideas about the War. I don't want to criticize General Pershing – I know he ranks among the greatest generals we've ever had, right along with Grant and Lee and Israel Putnam, but same time what we ought to done, what I'd 've done if I'd been running things, was to march right straight through to Berlin, and make them Germans suffer *good* – suffer like we did.

I was explaining this to my wife, and she

says, "Why, Lowell T. Schmaltz," she says, "I'm ashamed of you! Don't we know some Germans that are awful' nice folks?"

"You don't know the Germans like I do," I says to her. "They haven't got any forward-looking ideas. They believe in rule by tyranny and despotism and compulsion and all that, and if they haven't understood our democratic ideas, they ought to 've been *forced* to, that's what they ought to 've been!" I told her. "But same time you got to hand it to 'em – they certainly have buckled down to work ever since the War. Be a good thing if *our* workmen worked like that, 'stead of watching the clock and thinking about a raise all the time!"

But make a long story short, we certainly enjoyed our stay, and we went on to New York.

I was kind of sore all the time I was in New York, though. These damn' New Yorkers – I hope none of you gentlemen come from New York – they seem to think they run the nation, and what I always say is, as a matter of fact they're the most provincial town in the country! Give me Chicago every time.

You see, when I go to Chicago, in the first place I always stay at the Hotel Grand Imperial Palace, it's a nice quiet little place and the clerks *know* me and try to give me a little service, but in those big New York hotels, they're so darn' independent, you'd think they were doing you a favour.

Then when it comes to business –

In Chicago I usually do the bulk, you might say, of my business with Starbright, Horner, and Dodd; and Billy Dodd himself looks after me, and say, there's a man that it's a pleasure to do business with, a square-shooter if ever there was one, and always got a good story and a two-bit cigar for you, and acts like he was glad to see you, and he isn't one of those fellows to throw seven kind of cat-fits if maybe a fellow is temporarily a little short and wants an extension of a couple of days or a month or so. Yes sir, and many's the good lunch I've had with Billy in the old Palmer House before they tore it down, and though of course this new Palmer House is you might say a regular palace, still, there was kind of an atmosphere about the old place, and say, they certainly did know how to

cook steak and fried onions to a turn. Um! And oyster stew. But in New York –

All this darn' fancy French food, and the *prices* –

"My God," I says to one of these smart-aleck head-waiters, or maybe he was what they call a captain, anyway he was the fellow that takes the order and then he hands it on to the regular waiter. "My God," I said to him, when I looks at the prices on the bill of fare, "I just come in here to eat," I says. "I don't want to buy the hotel!"

And just the same way in the business world.

Why say, the firm that was handling these new mimeograph machines, they said they were behind on their orders and they couldn't make a delivery right away. Oh, that's all right, I told 'em – why couldn't they fill my order and keep some other fellow waiting?

No sir, they said, they wouldn't do it. They were just naturally arbitrary about it, and when I tried to make 'em understand that with the class and volume of business that *I* do, they ought to be willing to make some concessions, they acted like a bunch of human icicles.

Some day I'm going to write a letter to the New York newspapers and tell 'em what a real he-American from the Middle West thinks about their town –

The noise, and traffic so thick you can't get anywhere, and the outrageous prices and –

And no home-life. Folks all out in the evening, hitting it up at these night clubs and everything. Now you take us, back home, for instance. Evenings, except maybe when I have to be at the lodge or some Kiwanis committee meeting, or maybe Delmerine or Robby are at the movies or a party or something, we all just settle down around the radio and have a real old-fashioned homey time together. But not in New York! No sir! I swear, I don't know what the nation's coming to –

And too many foreigners – fellows with Wop names and Hunky names and Lord knows what all – and this corrupt politics –

Oh say, speaking of politics, if I may interrupt myself a moment and take the risk of straying from my story, I got to tell you what I heard at the Kiwanis luncheon just this past week. Our congressman, and I think it's pretty

generally conceded even right in Washington that he's got one of the ablest minds in the entire House of Representatives, he got back from an extensive investigation of the European status – spent six weeks in Germany, France, and Italy, and he gave it as his measured opinion that all these countries are so prosperous now that we certainly ought to press for the payment of our debt in full! Why, he said that in the better class of hotels in those countries, you could get just as good food and nearly as expensive as in New York itself! And they complaining about being poor!

But to get back to my story, I didn't think so much of New York, though we did have one dandy evening – we ran into some folks from home in the hotel lobby, and we all went out to a Chink restaurant and threw in some of the best chicken chow mein that I ever ate in my life, and then we went to a movie that I knew was good because I'd seen it in Zenith – Hoot Gibson in a crackajack western film.

But Delmerine, she liked New York, and my Lord, how that girl did keep nagging and teasing and complaining –

She wanted to go to one of these night clubs. I pointed out to her that all day long while I had to work, talking to a lot of different firms, she and her mother were free to enjoy themselves – go to a matinee or look over the stores and shop a little (though I didn't encourage 'em to buy too much – "Why not wait till you get back home – the stores there are just as up-to-date as New York, far's I can see," I pointed out to 'em). But she kept insisting, and her mother more or less agreed with her, and so one night I took 'em to a swell night club that was recommended to me by one of the bell-boys at the hotel, cute little tad, knew the town like a book.

Well, thinks I, here's where I have a punk evening, but I want to admit that I was wrong. Not but what it was expensive, and I certainly wouldn't want to go to one of those places more'n once or twice a year, but say, that was some place!

First off, we was all kind of disappointed. We drives up to a house in the Fifties, just an ordinary-looking place, and all dark.

"This can't be the place," I says to the taxi-driver.

"Sure, this is the joint all right," he says.

"Are you sure?" I says.

"Sure, you bet," he says. "I've driven lots of folks here. You just ring that basement bell and they'll let you in," he says.

Well, I figured he probably knew his business, so my wife and Delmerine and I, we all piled out of the taxi, and I went and rang the bell at the basement door – well, they call it the basement, it was really practically the ground floor, but this was one of those houses that they got so many of in New York, or used to have anyway, though now a lot of 'em are being torn down to make way for modern apartment houses – greystone houses they call 'em, and you go up a flight of steps from the street to the front door, so the door to this basement floor, as they call it, was really kind of under these steps, practically on the ground level, only of course you go down into a kind of areaway that's a step or maybe it might have been two steps below the pavement level but not more than that if I remember rightly, and there was a kind of iron grilled door, but 's I said, there weren't any lights or anything that

we could see, and I wondered if the taxi-driver could 've been right and –

But I rung the bell and pretty soon, sure enough, the door opened, and by golly there was a fellow in one of these funny Lord High Admiral uniforms, and I says to him, "Is this the Nouvelle Desire –" That was the name of the joint I was looking for – "Is this the Nouvelle Desire?" I says.

"Yes, but I haven't the pleasure of knowing your face," he says – you know, some high-falutin' comeback like that.

Well, I kidded him along – I told him it wasn't such a hard face to know when you put your mind to it. Delmerine – she stood right back of me, and I must say, maybe it was just because she was my girl, but she wore a kind of light violet dress and shiny spangles and gold slippers, and say, she certainly looked as elegant as anybody there that night, and my wife wasn't such a slouch herself, for a Mid Western girl, and –

But as I was saying, Delmerine was standing right near me, and she kind of whispers to me, "Say, you hadn't ought to kid the servants like that."

But I knew this guy in the uniform wasn't any ordinary servant and I wanted to show him I was just as used to the Gay Life as anybody (of course I was wearing my dress-suit) and –

But anyway, he calls what I figured out to be the assistant manager – nice-looking fellow in a dress-suit, kind of dark-complected, Italian I guess, but a nice-spoken fellow.

He explained that this Nouvelle Desire was a club and they couldn't let in nobody that didn't belong, but I introduced him to the wife and Delmerine, and I explained we come from Zenith and was only in town for about a week, and I showed him my Elks card, and he looked us over good and he said maybe he could fix it – the regular membership cost two hundred bucks a head a year but finally he let me have a temporary membership for that week for only five bucks a head.

So we got in all safe and –

Maybe you couldn't see any lights outside, but inside, oh boy! It was fixed up as elegant as if it was the Vanderbilts' ballroom. They'd turned the whole parlour floor – that is, the

floor above the basement, I guess they had the kitchen and all like that on the basement floor –

And here was a funny thing: this assistant manager – he and I got to be quite chummy; he told me to call him Nick, and I said he was to call me Low, but he said that was against the rules – and Nick told me something that may surprise you gentlemen as it certainly surprised me at the time: he told me that they did all their cooking by electricity!

Then as I say, there was this kind of ballroom. Half-way up, the wall was all red satin or silk or something, with a lot of what they call Modern Art decoration, or that's what Nick called it – all kinds of zigzags and big flowers and everything in gold; and then above that the walls was all hung with flowers. I found they was artificial flowers, but they looked so real you had to touch 'em before you'd believe it. And some of the tables was in kind of booths fixed up so that they looked like grape arbours and all like that. And at the end of the room there was some great big yellow marble columns – it looked like real genuwine marble, though it may not have been – in front of where

the orchestra played – and say, the boys in that orchestra certainly were some jazz babies all right, all coons but they had a regular high-class musical education, Nick told me later, and the fellow that played the saxophone – say, if they got anybody better'n him in Paul Whiteman's[1] band, I want to hear him, that's all – Why say, he could make that ole saxophone sound like a fog horn or a sick cow or anything he wanted.

Well, before we got settled down – there weren't many folks there yet – Nick took me aside and said they had a regular sure-enough old-fashioned bar on the floor above, and he thought maybe he could fix it so I could go up and get outside of a little real liquor. The rules of the club, or so he said anyway, the rules of the club made every fellow buy wine at his table, and when it comes to fizz, of course it's a grand high-class wine, but it ain't got the authority like hootch, like the fellow says.

Well, make a long story short, he went away and he fixed it so we could go up to the bar.

I'd just intended to let Delmerine and her

[1] The Ysaye and Toscanini of America.

mother have some ginger ale up there, but seems they didn't stock any soft drinks, and anyway Delmerine put up a holler.

"I want a cocktail," she says, "and I'll bet so does Mamma, if she tells the truth. Maybe we'll never get to another night club again," she says. "And besides," she says, "you've let me taste a sip of your cocktail when you've had 'em at home. And think of what my bunch will say if I go back home and tell 'em we went to a night club and I couldn't have a cocktail. I'm not a kid," she says.

Well, anyway, I kicked, and I pointed out her mother didn't want any – my wife's a great believer in prohibition – but her mother, dog-gone her, she went and laid right down on me and didn't back me up – just kind of giggled, and said she wouldn't mind one herself, just this once. So, make a long story short, we all had a cocktail – Mame took a Bronx, and Del-merine took a side-car, if I remember rightly, and I ordered a Martini and then I said, "By golly, I believe I'll have a Manhattan. Must be five years since I've had a Manhattan cocktail." And so I had a Manhattan. And then I sneaked

in a couple highballs while Mame and the girl was in the ladies' dressing-room, and say, by that time I certainly did feel primed for one high wide and fancy evening.

And I want to say that, think what you may of New York, we certainly had said evening.

Nick had fixed us up a nice little table almost right next to where they danced.

We looked around and there was a nice-looking lot of people there – they was just coming in. Delmerine was just saying, "Oh, I wish we knew somebody here – I won't have anybody to dance with except you, Papa," and I was informing her that I was regarded as by golly just as good a dancer as anybody at the Country Club, when – Say, you could 've knocked me down with a feather! Yes sir, I hears a familiar voice, and there stands Sam Gierstein of the Mammoth Clothing Company of Zenith – fellow I'd often met at the Athletic Club.

Now there's a whole lot of fellows I'd rather seen than Sam. To tell the truth, just between ourselves, he hasn't got any too good a reputation for square dealing, and I've heard some

mighty queer rumours about the way him and his lady secretary carry on. But same time – you know how it is when you're away from home – especially in a city like New York where they're such a chilly lot of stiffs: familiar face sure does look good to you.

So we invites Sam to sit down, and say, I will say one thing for him, he certainly did insist on buying his share of wine and then some. And he sure could dance. I never did like his looks – kind of too dark and good-looking, and big black eyes like you don't really like to see in a real he-male, but he certainly did spin Delmerine and even the wife around that ole floor all right. And me, after I'd got a little champagne into my system, I guess I wouldn't have hardly beefed much even if he'd kissed Delmerine –

Not that he did anything like that, you understand; he acted like a perfect gentleman, you understand; and once when I was dancing with Mame, and I kind of slipped and almost fell down – they had that floor altogether too slippery for any use – why, it was Sam that grabbed me and kept me from falling.

Though I don't like the way he's been hanging around the house since we been back in Zenith – seems he's got a wife somewhere only they're separated. Delmerine, she says I'm crazy. She says she just discusses music with Sam – seems he knows a lot about it. But I don't like her being out late –

Oh, I guess I'm an old crank. But Del is so young, and she thinks she knows everything but she's innocent as a baby, but – Oh, I'm a regular fusser. But anyway, we certainly did have one large round time that evening – evening, huh! Say, we certainly were high-rollers for once! I'll bet it was three o'clock before we hit the day. I remember –

It was kind o' comic! Here was Mame – that's my wife – supposed to be a good respectable dame, and me, a deacon in the church, and us coming down Broadway at three G.M. singing "We Won't Go Home Until Morning!"

You see, Sam – he's got the nerve of the devil – he picked up a couple from Fort Worth, Texas (and maybe she wasn't some baby; say, she had all the regular New York dames there beat a mile), and somehow, I don't exactly

remember how, we got acquainted with another couple from San José, California, a gentleman that was in the fruit-ranching business and his wife and son, he took a shine to Delmerine; and up in the bar I got talking to a gentleman and lady from Kansas City, Missouri – or it may have been Kansas City, Kansas; I can't exactly remember, at this late date – and the whole lot of us carried on like we'd always known each other, dancing and laughing and drinking toasts and singing and drinking and cutting up – Say! But I hate to think of what it cost me. But as I told my wife, that's the way of it, in New York.

But I don't need to tell you gentlemen about New York. Probably you know it better'n I do, and you want me to sing my little song and get it finished and get on to Washington and my experiences at the White House. Yes sir, the less said about New York the better. Money-mad, that's what the New Yorkers are.

If I wanted to sacrifice other more worth-while things, like our home-life and friendships and reading worth-while literature, and getting in a good fish every summer – And let me tell

you that they can talk about Canada all they want to, but if they can show me any better fishing than I get up in Northern Michigan, right within you'd hardly call it more'n an overnight ride from Zenith, why just let 'em show it to me, that's all!

But the way I look at it, a fellow ought to be prosperous for his family's sake and that of his own position in the community, but money-making can be overdone, and what I always says is: Ideals before Dollars every time.

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So that's what I think of New York and – And then we packed up and went on to Washington, and say, Delmerine pretended she didn't care, but she was so excited over the prospect of having a chat with the President that she couldn't hardly sit still on the train. Well, so was I – hadn't seen Cal for so many years. I got to thinking maybe he might invite us to lunch or supper, but still, I knew that was unreasonable – having to entertain so many people – ambassadors, and officials of the Order of Moose, and so on – but I guess I was pretty excited just the same.

I don't know how well you gentlemen know Washington, but the new station there is very handsome and up-to-date in every respect, with a great big open space – the Plaza I believe they call it – in front; and what I'd never known is, you can see the dome of the Capitol right from the front of the station. I tell you I got a mighty big thrill out of that.

Well, Mame wanted us to get a room in the hotel first and get washed up, but I says, "No, sir, we better see the President first and see what his plans are; we'll just keep the taxi waiting and I don't care if it costs a dollar and a half; 'tisn't often in your life that you're going to sit in with a President of these United States!"

So we got into a taxi and we started off all het up, and all of a sudden I says to my wife: "Say, do you notice anything funny about this taxi?"

"Why no," she says, "I don't know's I do; it looks all right to me. Why?"

"Looks all right!" I says. "I should say it does! Do you mean to tell me you don't notice something different about this taxi?"

"Why no," she says.

"Well, what make of car is it?" I says.

Of course Delmerine has to horn in. 'It's a Studebaker, isn't it?" she says.

"Oh it is, is it, Miss Smarty!" I says. "My God, and me teaching you to drive! It is not a Studebaker, and it isn't a Cadillac, no, and it isn't a flivver either! It's a Buick. See the significance?"

Well, they both stared at me – couldn't get the idea at all – just like women, even the brightest of 'em.

"Can't you see?" I says. "Here's the Buick, the biggest-selling six-cylinder car in the United States if not in the world. And yet how often do you see a Buick taxi? Not very often. Ever think of that? Yes sir, it's a mighty peculiar thing, and I'm sure I don't know why it is. At least I'm practically certain it's a Buick – of course with a taxi body on it – I didn't happen to notice the hood, but from the looks of the dashboard – Anyway –"

So I tapped on the window, and the driver – he probably thought we were just ordinary tourists that wanted to see the town, and we were passing some building or other and he

just hardly turns his head and he says, "It's the Pensions Building." (Or it may have been the Patent Building – I didn't pay much attention; I was so worked up and excited about seeing the President, and I can't exactly remember at this late date.)

"No," I hollers to him, "what I want to know is: isn't this a Buick taxi?"

"Yeh," he says.

"There!" I says to the girls. "What did I tell you!"

You bet!

So we came to the White House and –

Now even you gentlemen that 've been to Washington and seen the White House may not know that the offices, including the President's own private office, are in wings stretching out on either side of the old main structure. The wings are new, I should think, and they're so low that you wouldn't hardly notice 'em from the street in front – not hardly know they were there unless you'd happened, like I was, to be privileged to enter 'em.

So there we came up the avenue to that famous old place –

I tell you it was a mighty moving thing to think of the famous men that had inhabited that structure: Grant and McKinley and Harding and Garfield and everybody! By golly, as I told the Kiwanis when I addressed them about my trip, it certainly gave a fellow inspiration. For what after all is a greater inspiration than the lives of our heroes –

That reminds me that recently – why, in fact, it was just a couple of nights ago, and a neighbour and I were having a little visit, and he says to me, "Lowell, who do you think have been the greatest heroes of the United States since 1900 and the geniuses?"

Well, a question like that certainly makes a fellow think, and him and I, we began making lists, and it just happens I've still got mine in my pocket here, and here's how I figured out our leading intellects:

Coolidge, Harding, Wilson (though I'm a Republican), Ford, Lindbergh, Billy Sunday,[1] Pershing, Roosevelt, John Roach Straton,[2] Judge Gary and –

[1] The Protestant Pope.

[2] The leading Baptist Fundamentalist of America.

Now here's a couple more names that may surprise you gentlemen; maybe you never looked at it like this. I figure that what you might call the arts ought to be represented, and I put in Anne Nichols – say, the author of a play like "Abie's Irish Rose," that can run five years, is in my mind – maybe it's highbrow and impractical to look at it that way, but the way I see it, she's comparable to any business magnate, and besides, they say she's made as much money as Jack Dempsey.[1]

And here's a name that may surprise you still more: Samuel Gompers!

Yes, I knew that would surprise you, my putting in a man that lots of folks think he merely stood for union labour and labour disturbances and all those kind of Bolshevik activities. But it seems that Gompers – a fellow, some kind of professor he was, was explaining this to us at the Kiwanis Club here just recently – Gompers stood right square *against* labour disturbances. He thought that labouring men ought to have their rights, and I suppose that's true, but the way he looked at it, he wanted

[1] A famous actor.

employees and employers and the general public to join hands in one great brotherhood for the glory of the Union and the extension of our markets into lands now unfairly monopolized by England and Germany. Yes sir!

So, as I say, we drove up to the White House –

I'd told the chauffeur to go right up to the front door – just like I'd expect Cal Coolidge to come right up to *my* front door, if he came to call on me in Zenith. I didn't understand then about the arrangement of the White House.

But there was some kind of cop at the gate and he says, "What do you want, please?"

"What do I want, officer?" I says. "What do I *want*? Why, I just want to call on the President, that's all!" I says. "I'm an old friend of his, that's all!" I says.

Well, I explains, and he tells me the proper caper is to go round to the office entrance, so I says all right; I'd be the last, I says to him, as a friend of the President, to want to break any proper regulations.

Well, make a long story short, at last there we were, in one of the waiting-rooms to the

President's own offices, and a gentleman came in – fine-looking gentleman he was, all dressed up like Sunday morning, in a cutaway coat and striped pants and seems he was practically the President's first main secretary, and I presented my wife and Delmerine to him, and I explained about the President and me being classmates.

"I know the President's a busy man, but I'd like a look at the old kid," I tells him, "and I kind of thought I'd like to have my wife and daughter shake hands with him."

Well sir, he understood perfectly.

He went right in and saw the President – didn't keep me waiting one minute, no sir, not hardly a minute.

He came back and said the President was awful' sorry he couldn't have us come in just that second, but seems he was all tied up with an important international conference about – I think it was about Geneva he said – and would I wait. This secretary was mighty nice, too; he didn't let us sit there like bumps on a log; he sat and visited with us, and that's how I had the chance to get the real lowdown on so

many of the President's opinions and activities, but I don't want you gentlemen to give any of this stuff to the newspapers.

I asked this secretary, Mr. Jones his name was – I said to him, "What does the President think about disarmament, Mr. Jones?"

"Well, it just happens," he says, "that I can tell you in the President's own words. I heard him talking to the Secretary of State," he says – say, maybe that didn't give me a kick, sitting in as it were on a conference between the President and the Secretary of State! But anyway: "I heard him talking to the Secretary," Mr. Jones told me, "and he said, 'Frank, big navies cost a lot of money and in my opinion it would be a saving if we could get the different nations to reduce them.' "

"Well, well, I'm mighty glad to find that out, Mr. Jones," I said, "and it confirms my own opinion about disarmament. Say, tell me," I says, "how does the President live, in his personal life? What does he take for breakfast?"

Well, Mr. Jones explained that the President took a simple breakfast just like the rest of us – just some coffee and toast and eggs and porridge

and so on. I was mighty proud and glad to hear that Cal was unspoiled by all his fame and was still just the same simple direct fellow he'd been when we were chums.

"What does the President think of the situation in China?" I asked Mr. Jones.

"Well, I think I can say without violating any confidences that contrary to the opinion of certain senators, the President feels the situation in China is serious and in fact almost critical and that – but this mustn't go any further," Mr. Jones told me, "he feels decidedly that while the rights and properties of the Great Powers must be safeguarded, yet we must consider patiently and fairly the rights of the Chinese themselves."

"Well, sir, I certainly am interested to hear that," I told him. "There's no question about it. That's exactly how I feel myself."

You see, I'd had a kind of you might call it a special opportunity of getting the real inside dope about the Chinese situation and the Bolshevik influence there. I heard a missionary, just recently back from the scene of disturbance in China, speak at the Wednesday Evening

Supper at our church – the Pilgrim Congregational Church of Zenith – Dr. G. Prosper Edwards is the pastor, very famous pulpit orator, you've quite probably heard him on the radio, tunes in on WWWL every second Sunday morning at eleven-fifteen, very eloquent man and a rip-snorting good scholar, too, but very liberal. As he always says, he's more than ready to fellowship with any Christian body no matter what their differences in theology, providing they merely accept the fundamental and indisputable elements of Christianity, such as the Virgin Birth and the proven fact of after-life.

I tell you how I feel about religion, anyway.

I'm a Congregationalist myself, and it isn't for one second just because I happened to be born one, as one of these smart-aleck infidels was trying to prove to me one day, but because of my deep reverence for the great leaders of our church, like Jonathan Edwards and Roger Baldwin – no, come to think of it, he was a Baptist, wasn't he, that Rhode Island guy?

But anyway: just the same to-day: fellows like Newell Dwight Hillis and S. Parkes Cad-

man,[1] that during the War they did as much to win the struggle for world-wide democracy as any soldier, the way they showed up the secret plans of Germany to dominate the world – and the way Dr. Cadman writes this column in the newspapers; say, he knows just about everything, and he can clear up your troubles about anything, whether it's an incurable sickness or who wrote Shakespeare – yes sir, a real big typical American leader.

But same time, way I look at it, the other denominations – the Methodists and Baptists and Presbyterians and Campbellites – they're all working together to make a greater and purer America.

Our generation, I guess we still got a lot of the Old Harry in us. Me, I admit, I smoke and sometimes I take a little drink – but never to excess; if there's anything I despise it's a man that can't hold his liquor – and I do like a nice drive on Sunday, and sometimes I cuss a little, and I guess I ain't above looking at a pretty

[1] The Protestant Erasmus, but a man of broader culture and greater positiveness America was so fortunate as to acquire him from England.

ankle even yet. But it's my firm belief – maybe you gentlemen never thought about it this way – if we'll just support the churches and give the preachers a chance, a generation will come which won't even *want* to do those things, and then America will stand forth before the world such a nation as has never been seen, yes sir, and I'm mighty glad to fellowship with Methodists or –

Not that I think so much of these Christian Scientists and Seventh Day Adventists and all them, though. They carry things too far, and I don't believe in going to extremes in anything; and as for the Catholics – I hope none of you gentlemen are Catholics and I wouldn't want this to go any farther, but I've always felt the Catholics were too tolerant toward drinking and smoking and so aren't, you might say, really hardly typically American at all.

And as to religion in general, they tell me there's a lot of smart-aleck highbrows to-day that are calling the truth of Christianity in question. Well, I may not be any theologian, but I wish I could meet one of these fellows, and believe me, I'd settle his hash.

"Look here," I'd tell him; "in the first place, it stands to reason, don't it, that fellows specially trained in theology, like the preachers, know more than us laymen, don't it? And in the second, if the Christian religion has lasted two thousand years and is to-day stronger than ever – just look, for instance, at that skyscraper church they're building in New York – is it likely that a little handful of you smart galoots are going to be able to change it?"

I guess they never thought of that. Trouble with fellows like agnostics is that you simply can't get 'em to stop and think and use their minds!

And what have they got to put in the *place* of religion? Know what the trouble with those fellows is? *They're destructive and not constructive!*

But as I was saying, our church has a regular Wednesday Evening Supper, before prayer-meeting, and say, the ladies of the church certainly do serve one of the tastiest suppers you ever ate, and for only forty cents – Hamburg steak with Spanish sauce, or creamed chipped beef, or corn beef and cabbage, and

sometimes ice cream for dessert, all A1. And they usually have a speaker, and this evening I was speaking of, the speaker that spoke on China was a missionary, and he gave us the real low-down on China, and he told us it was fierce the way the Chinks were carrying on, and not respecting either their trade treaties – and what a *damn* fool thing *that* was, because here they had a chance to get in contact with America and England and get civilized and give up worshipping idols – But he showed a real Christian spirit. He said that even though the Chinks had practically kicked him out, he believed they ought to have another chance to try to run their own country.

Well, I could see that was fair, and I was real interested to see the President agreed with his point of view, and then I asked Mr. Jones –

"Mr. Jones," I said, "what's the real truth about the President's fishing? Is he a good fisherman?" I said.

"He's one of the best. His catch always compares favourably with that of any other member of the party, when he sets his mind to it, but

you must remember that he's constantly weighed down by the cares of state," Mr. Jones said.

"Yes, I can see that," I told him, "and personally, I think it's a shame for some of these newspapers that haven't got anything better to write to make fun of him. Say, another thing," I asked him, "does the President belong to any of the service clubs – Rotary and Kiwanis and so on?"

"No, in his position," Mr. Jones explained to me, "in his position he couldn't hardly discriminate between them, but I think I'm not betraying any secret when I say that the President has the highest admiration for the great service and ideals of all these organizations."

Well, I was mighty glad to hear that, and I think you gentlemen will be, too, whether you belong to 'em or not. For after all, what organizations are doing a greater good and providing more real happiness to-day than the service clubs, all of 'em, though I myself am a Kiwanian and I can't help feeling that maybe our own organization has got the edge on the other fellows – we aren't as darned snobbish as these

Rotarians, and yet we aren't, you might say, as common as the Civitans and the Lions and – Yes sir!

Think what these clubs provide. A chance for a lot of the most responsible and forward-looking men of the community to get together once a week, and not only have a high old time, with all the dignity of our positions checked at the door, calling each other by our first names – Think of what that means! Say, here's some high mucka-muck of a judge; for that hour or so I call him "Pete," and slap him on the back and kid him about his family, and stands to reason that any man enjoys having a chance to let down and be human like that.

And then the good we do! Why say, just this past year our Zenith Kiwanians have put up not less than two hundred and sixty-three highway markers within forty miles of Zenith, and we gave the kids at an orphan asylum a dandy auto ride and free feed. And believe me it was one fine ad for the Kiwanians, because we took the kids out in trucks, and every truck had on it a great big red sign,

"Free Outing for the Unfortunate Kiddies, Provided Free by Zenith Kiwanis Club."

To say nothing of the fine speakers we have each week – the mayor and cancer specialists and authors and vaudeville artists and everybody. And these soreheads that make fun of –

But be that as it may, I was mighty glad to hear the President speak like that and to get his real inside view, and so I asks Mr. Jones, "What's, uh – what's the President's views on taxation, if it isn't impertinent to ask?"

Now you gentlemen will be interested to learn what Mr. Jones told me, because of course that's one of the most important topics of the day, and Jones spoke right up, without hesitation:

"I know for a fact," he told me, "that the President feels that the burdens of taxation should be so equably distributed that they shall lay no undue burden on the poor and unfortunate, yet at the same time they must in no sense be prejudicial to honest business interests or cramp the necessary conduct and expansion of commerce."

And some fly-by-nights claim that the President isn't a deep thinker!

And then – Delmerine had been on pins and needles at the prospect of talking with the President; couldn't hardly keep still in her chair. Mr. Jones was real nice to her, and I certainly was proud of the way one of our home girls could answer up to a man in official position like that.

"So you come from Zenith," he says to her. "Do you like it?"

"Oh, you bet," she said. "I just think Zenith is the nicest city in America. Of course I'd rather live in New York, but my, do you know we have the finest park system in the United States?"

"Is that a fact!" he says. "No, I didn't know that. And I guess you like to Charleston," he says. "Or have you gone out for the black bottom? Do you like it?"

"Do I?" she says. "Oh boy! I'd show you, but I guess this isn't hardly the place."

"No, I'm afraid it isn't," he says, and we all four bust right out laughing together – wasn't that a comical idea – to dance the Charleston in the President's offices!

I was just going to ask Mr. Jones how the

President felt about socialism when there was a messenger come out and called him in and he was gone about a couple minutes, it couldn't have been more than that, and he come back, and say, he did look real sorry.

"I've got terrible news," he told me. "The President was just ready to see you when the British ambassador come in with some important business that'll take a couple of hours, and then he has to hustle down to the *Mayflower* – that's his yacht – and be gone maybe four-five days, on an important secret conference. But he specially sent me to tell you that he's heart-broken he can't see you, and he hopes you'll drop in any time you're in Washington."

So you gentlemen can see that it isn't by accident but by real thinking and good fellowship that President Coolidge – yes, or any other president we've had recently – maintains his position, and I hope I haven't bored you and now I'll dry up and let some other fellow talk and –

But just to speak of socialism a moment. I'm willing to give every man a fair square deal,

but when it comes to supporting a lot of loafers, the way I look at it is that the constructive, practical people like ourselves, who control the country, ought, you might say –

– certainly are too gummy, these cards, and besides that, I'll bet Billy Dodd here, as soon as he got through soaking me with the most gosh-awful assortment of office supplies *you* ever saw – I'll bet he sneaked up here in the hotel and marked the whole darn' pack. Just what you'd expect a Chicago guy to do! So we'll get a fresh pack and go on with our scientific investigation into poker and –

But say, speaking about coming to Chicago, I certainly did have one rotten ole trip from Zenith, last night. Now here's a funny thing about me: the first night on a sleeper, I can't hardly sleep at all.

And yet the time that Mrs. Schmaltz and I went away clear out to California last year, great big long trip like that, while I couldn't sleep very good the *first* night – just kept turning over and over, and whenever the train'd stop, I'd wake up with a start –

Now I know you boys are impatient to get

on with the game and don't want to hear anything about California. I know how it is. Why sometimes in the family circle, when we have these little heart-to-heart talks that are so valuable in moulding the characters of children – for, as the Good Book says, "The tree is inclined as the twig is bent" – and while I may tell Robby and Delmerine, my children, that it's only things of culture and the mind that matter, yet all the time that I'm lecturing 'em, myself maybe I'd like to make a duck and get off to a poker game! So I simply despise a fellow that interrupts a game with a lot of gabble. But I did want to speak about California just for a second.

And what a state it is! What a *state*!

Now I'm mighty good and proud of my own state, Winnemac. It's a matter of proven facts and statistics that next to Michigan, Illinois, Ohio, Wisconsin, and possibly New York and New Jersey, we have the largest output of motor-cars in the United States. And the Zenith High School is the largest and finest high-school building for any city of equal size in the country, and furthermore, by a recent

and very wise enactment of the Board of Education, no teacher is allowed to teach in the school unless he – or she, as the case may be – unless he proves that at the last election he turned out and voted either the Republican or Democratic ticket, which give us an unusually large percentage of really solid and responsible birds among the profs in the school, instead of a lot of crazy intelligentzias and lice like that. And then of course there's other states –

I can well imagine that New York is proud of its great cities, manufacturing so many electric goods, like such absolutely essential accessories to civilization as electric irons, and I can imagine that Georgia is proud of the way it's turned from a lazy plantation state with a lot of folks just riding horseback into a modern industrial centre with as big factories and as many machines as Massachusetts.

And then old Massachusetts itself – what a state that is! Right up to date, and yet showing their respect for the principles of the Founders of the Country by resolutely pinching any or all books that by reference to prostitution and marital unhappiness and all those things that

we grown-up men know exist, yet why increase the unhappiness of the world by talking about them –

But I mean: there's a lot of high-class states in the Union, but is there any one of them that better combines natural and scenic beauties with a high scale of comfortable living than California?

I've read quite a lot about the history of California – I read clear through an article in the *Literary Digest* that gave all the more important facts, and here's the way I figure out the history of the state:

Of course California has always had a lot of high mountains, which, it's needless to say, were there since long before man came to the trackless wilds, also, of course, the ocean, but still, in the old days, even after the state was settled by white and civilized men, there was nobody there to advertise them – to, you might say, correlate them with the rest of our American life.

Way I understand it: in the former and earlier days, the whole state was just filled with a lot of lazy ranchereros, partly descended from the Spanish, which of course let *them* out from

the start. You certainly could by no stretch of the imagination see the Spanish as contributing constructively to Americanization. And then around San Francisco there was a lot of these artists and painters and all like that, and writers, and they just sat around and did nothing constructive, you might say, but just sit around and drink a lot of wine and chew the rag and do a lot of talking – lot of these fellows like Jack London and Frank Norris and Bret Harte and Upton Sinclair and Eugene Debs – no, Eugene Field I think his name was.

But aside from nothing but scenery, what did California *have* in those days? What did it *have*?

Here was this great empire that –

I remember reading the Reverend Dr. Sieffer in his remarkable book – and say, there's a book that I want to recommend to you boys. It's all right to read a lot of fiction, and I guess I appreciate a rattling good story, say like a Western novel where the hero prevents this fellow from running off his boss's stock, as much as anybody; but if you're going to improve your mind – and what is after all more char-

acteristic of American life than improving our minds? – and if you're going to improve your mind, what a fellow needs is real constructive and historical stuff.

And Reverend Sieffer – I can't remember just what he called his book, and fact is, busy like I am with all my business interests, I don't hardly get time enough to sit down and improve my mind like I'd like to, but it was a book about the Purposes of God as Shown in American History.

And the picture he gave of California in the days before it was combined with the main streams and currents of American destiny – Say, it certainly'd make a fellow stop and think.

Here was this great country. Here was these titanic mountains – well, I don't want to get high-falutin and poetic, but as I said in my little talk that I gave to the Kiwanis Club on my return from California, here was these titanic mountains with their snow-crowned tops kissing the eternal blue of that vast Western sky. And here, as Reverend Sieffer pointed out in his book, were those great canyons,

stretching their silent but pine-filled depths up to the higher and unknown divides. And here was vast plains ready for the happy plough of civilized man but as yet filled with nothing but the howl of the coyote. And here was this great big huge long sea-coast with the waves of the blue Pacific beating against it but without one single solitary real-estate development or even a resort to prepare it for the coming and use of civilized men.

And then what happened? What happened!

Say, to my mind, what happened in California, and that within just a few years, mind you, is one of the miracles that to a *thinking* man proves that the providence and care of God has always guided the destinies of the American people.

Some guy – and say, it's a damn' shame but I don't suppose his name will ever be known to history – some guy in Iowa (or it might have been Minnesota or Wisconsin or Illinois or even Missouri, yes, or for that matter he might have come from Kansas) – but anyway, this fellow, he saw that when the great Middle Western population had finished their efforts in growing

corn and those equally valuable and constructive efforts in selling supplies to the farmers who are, after all, say what you may, the great backbone and strength of our nation – he saw that it would be the proper caper for these gentlemen to retire to that lovely and you might say idyllic California coast and there in their old age enjoy the fruits of a lifetime of arduous and frugal toil.

And then what happened? What happened!

All along that barren land, lovely little bungalows began to spring up. Where formerly there hadn't been one single darn' thing but sea-shore and mountain valleys, there sprung up, almost overnight you might say, a whole kit and bilin' of dandy little bungalows, and where formerly, as Reverend Sieffer says, you couldn't hear a blasted thing but the sullen roaring of the breakers on the shore, you could hear phonographs going, radios tuned in on Chicago, nice jolly normal young folks dancing to the sound of jazz, and the sound of Fords and motor cars as the folks started off for a nice picnic in some canyon.

Say, you take it from one who's travelled!

I've seen it and I know! I've seen beauty-spots in California where even twenty years ago there couldn't 've been hardly a single human being in sight – some point of interest filled with holy quiet between the eternal hills; and now you'll find there, especially on a Sunday, no less than maybe a couple hundred cars parked, and all the folks out there laughing and talking and being neighbourly and swapping news from the folks back home in Iowa, and cooking hot dogs and wienies and all like that, and looking at the scenery.

*

What a state! Say, I don't know where you boys were born, and I wouldn't want to hurt anybody's feelings, but my experience is that the cafeterias in Los Angeles are the best in the world, bar none!

Why, I remember one time Mame (that's my wife), Mamie and I went into a place –

Say, golly, it looked like one of these cathedrals! This cafeteria, I mean.

Say, that place was so high, it must 've occupied the first two stories of this building it was in – it was a great big skyscraper, in fact the

national executive head-quarters of the Fundamentalist and Anti-Evolution Full Bible League, so you can imagine what a big structure it was. Well sir, this cafeteria occupied the full heighth of the first two stories and – and now this'll surprise any of you boys that haven't been in California – the whole interior was in tiles, floor, ceiling, and walls.

Elegant? Why say, those tiles shone so's it almost hurt your eyes! And all the tables, and there must 've been a thousand of them or maybe fifteen hundred, I figured about twelve hundred myself and Mame agreed with me, was every one of 'em stained a nice neat green, and every one had on it – now this was what you might call Service, and, mind you, they didn't charge one cent extra for it – every table had on it a nice illuminated motto in art printing.

I can still remember the one that was on our table. It was kind of surrounded by a border of poppies and Columbia River salmon, and it said:

"Welcome, folks! How's the old Mother back home?

"We like our Special Onion and Peanut Butter Sandwiches, our Fullfruit Vegetarian Steak, and our Anti-alcohol Mince Pie, but while you're smacking their flavour, don't forget that maybe your old Mammy back home might like to hear from you.

"And if she comes to join you, just bring her around to the Manager here and introduce her, and he'll be glad to blow her, free of charge, on her first visit here, to a Welcome Mammy Free Feed, to the value of not over forty-seven cents."

Pretty damn' thoughtful, eh? and good advertising.

As I say, here was this elegant place, and they had a full orchestra, playing Southern airs, and at one end there was a reading and club room all with velvet chairs – a kind of an alcove railed off with velvet ropes – where you could go up after supper and read the home papers – they had the papers from Omaha and Hartford and Winona and Kalamazoo and all those places. And after supper, as you left the place, every man was presented with a free cigarette, two toothpicks and a copy of the Gospel of

St. Mark; and every lady was presented with a peppermint candy in a glassy-paper wrapper and a free powder puff, all free.

And did it please the customers? Say, *did* it! Well, you take just for an example –

Mame and I had just started throwing the chow into our faces when all of a sudden I hears a fellow at the next table –

Now mind you, if I hadn't learned later that he was a farmer, *I* wouldn't have known it, nor anybody else, not even the shrewdest observer. Why say, that fellow was dressed in a nice neat conservative College Park mixed-worsted suit, same as I was, and his wife, and a real bright little woman she was, too, she had on almost as nice a close-fitting cloche hat as Mame herself. But I mean to say: you couldn't have told they was farming folks – fact is, later, when I just happened to run into him at my garage, he told me that he was in the habit of reading the *Cosmopolitan* and all the best literature, just the same as we do in the big cities.

Well, as I say, this fellow, he kind of leaned forward, and he says to me, "Pretty nice place, this."

"It certainly is," I says.

"Say," he says, "while maybe the food *itself* don't taste so good, they certainly got everything else fixed up about as swell as a man could ask for – fixed up to the Queen's taste, eh?" he says.

"They certainly have," I says – I could feel he was a friendly sort of a cuss and I never was a fellow, even with my college training and the fact that I know President Coolidge and all, I never felt that a fellow ought to high-hat any really agreeable fellow that you happen to meet along the way, for what, after all, as our pastor has on more than one occasion said in our church, what are we after all, even the best of us, but fellow-pilgrims on that great Highway which is Life?

So I says to him, "They certainly have," I says. "Stranger here?" I says.

"Well, kind of, you might say," he says. "Mother and I been coming here to Los for quite a few years now, but still, same time, when you think it all over," he says, "when you take a great city like this, with all its wonders and entertainments," he says, "a fellow could be here

quite a few years and still not exhaust all the novelties, and particularly," he says, "in the line of religion."

The point is, to cut it short, that this gentleman had found a lot of interest in investigating the different kind of religions in Los Angeles.

Say! That guy may have been a farmer, but he wasn't so slow when it come to the real low-down on philosophy and religion! Say, he could teach *me* some things I didn't know!

He informed me (and I've had no reason to question his statistics) that this lady prophet, this Mrs. Aimee Semple McPherson, had increased her membership turnover 1,800 per cent. in two years, and that out of all her faith-healings, 62·9 per cent. had been successful and lasting, as observed by regular conservative physicians, over a period of two years, or it may have been even more than two years, I can't at the present moment, not having made a note of it, be exactly sure about the period involved.

And then – say! He certainly did tell me about a lot of new and interesting religions in Los Angeles.

Not that I'd want to go out for them personally, you understand. But he explained that there was – oh, God, I can't hardly remember them all, now. But there was this Hindu Breathing Cult, where if you just learned how to control your breathing you were guaranteed to live at least a hundred years. And there was the Lost Tribes of Israel Consolidation that proved the English were the descendants of Moses. And there was the Great Marzipan – no, Mazeppa, I think it was, something like that anyway – seems he was a guy that could get you right into touch with your ancestors and also a corker at palmistry –

But I'm afraid I'm drifting a little from my point. Point is that this gentleman and his wife both agreed that this cafeteria was better than any place they'd ever seen, even in Minneapolis!

Well, as I say, when I saw this place, I said to Mame –

Not that we had to economize, you understand. After all, I guess maybe we could 've stood the gaff at the Ambassador and the Biltmore and those other high-toned Los Angeles

hotels, maybe stood it better than a lot of these movie actors and oil men and all like that in dress-suits that try to show a lot of little wrens how well heeled they are, but probably next morning, back in the ole hall-room, they can't afford nothing more'n coffee and sinkers for breakfast!

We didn't have to economize, but at the same time, as you boys will realize, it's mighty nice to save a quarter now and then, and Mame and I had thought when we went to a cafeteria, maybe we'd get off cheap.

But when I saw this place, I says, "Well, Mamie," I says, "I guess here's where we get stuck."

You would 've thought that, wouldn't you, seeing all that luxury, and my God, maybe twenty-five hundred folks all feeding their faces at once and a hell of a bang of dishes – regular feast of Lucullus, or whoever he was, you might say.

But say –

What do you think the prices were? I noted 'em down (of course a fellow in the office-supply business, like Billy Dodd here and me,

we simply can't help becoming scientific) – I noted the prices down, while Mame and I was going along filling our trays at this cafeteria counter, and I still remember what we paid.

And remember all this food was high-class modern chow made by the best modern machinery with scientific proportion of the ingredients and no hand had ever touched or spoiled it.

Well, here were some of the prices: Old-fashioned Cape Cod Clam Chowder was seventeen cents. And real honest-to-God *clams* in it, too! And Old-time Essex Barbecue Roast Beef was twenty-three cents, and a great, big juicy South Dakota Mammoth Baked Potato was only eleven cents, and Mussolini Macaroni was twelve, and finally –

I'm kind of what you might call an epicure, and I do like to top off a good feed with something spicy, and so I had a Dickens Little Tim Old-time Christmas Plum Pudding, and all they soaked me for it, with both hard and soft sauce and a leaf of real holly on it, was twenty-seven cents! And say, I've tried all these plum puddings, Van Camp and Heinz and all the nationally advertised brands, yes sir, I've tried

the most scientific of 'em, and I've never had a better one than I got myself surrounded with that evening at the cafeteria – the Father Junipero Serra Mission Inn they called it, by the way.

Fact, afterward I kind of introduced myself to one of the managers, and he told me they made this plum pudding up themselves, and *he* claimed they used one and a quarter – well, it may have been one and *three* quarters per cent., I can't just exactly remember now – but anyway, he claimed they used more citron and more raisins in their plum pudding than any of the nationally advertised brands, and he told me that during the Christmas and holiday months, that is, from October to March, they sold an average of 897 plum puddings a day!

So you can see what a place *that* was!

And I almost forgot: for every six tables they had a free Christian Science literature stand with the *Monitor* and all the rest of 'em right there perfectly free for the taking.

Not that I think much of Christian Science myself. Me, I'm a Congregationalist. But still, it was pretty nice to be able to take some free literature home to your hotel, so's you could

read it if you ever got time in between trolley rides and going out motoring with folks from your home town and the movies and all those other pleasures that you find in Los Angeles.

But I fear I'm getting a little off my subject. I didn't mean to spend so much time on California. I just meant to say that I didn't sleep as good last night as I did on my trip to California –

And oh say, there is just one thing more that I want to add, if it won't bore you too much, about that Junipero Serra Inn: On each and every tray a fellow – and you don't have to ask him, he just does it voluntarily, without any fuss and feathers and nonsense about it, which is, of course, the ideal of Service – on each and every tray this fellow, and I figured he was a Portuguese or maybe a Wop, he places, instead of the paper napkins like you get in so many of the Eastern cafeterias, he places a real cloth napkin, that had printed on it, "Take Me Home with You, and When You Want an Old-time Time and a Homey Home away from Home, Don't Forget I Came from the World-Famed Serra Inn."

Pretty cute, eh?

But as I was saying:

*

You boys want to get on with the poker game, and so do I, and so I won't go into any details about my adventures in California. I agree with Billy that these cards are too gummy, and so I'll send down for some more and then we can get on with the game. And I guess maybe you boys could stand another highball, so we'll make it snappy –

*

Hello. Hel*lo*. Hel-lo! Hey, girlie, I want to get hold of one of your bright young bell-boys.

Oh you will, will you? Well say, I'd rather have you come up yourself!

Oh they do, do they! Well, I ain't one of that kind of guys.

No, I ain't! But say, girlie, if you happen to get kind of lonesome along about quitting-time, you just come up here to 232 and I'll introduce you to a few princes.

Oh, is that so!

*

Say, jeeze, these telephone girls are too fresh

for any use. That is a kind of a cute kid though, that number two.

Well, as I was saying –

Say, for God's sake, ain't that bell-boy *ever* coming? If *I* was running a hotel –

Come in!

Oh it's you, is it, kid! Where you been all night? Been out burying a sick grandmother at the baseball game? Now listen, son: You beat it right down to the drug-store here in the hotel and bring us up a nice fresh pack of cards – no, by God, we'll make it *two* packs, and the best kind they got! And shoot us up two more quarts of White Rock, and make it snappy, see?

*

Well say, gentlemen, all this time while we've been waiting for this damn' bell-boy, I'm afraid I've been forgetting my duties as a host.

Say when! That's what I call a real drink. *That*'ll put hair on your chest!

Say when! Fine!

Say when! Attaboy!

So! Now Father Schmaltz will try to get rid of his *own* cold, and maybe the bots and tripho-

sus, with a little touch of the old family remedy, and while we're waiting for the fresh cards, I'll go on, if it won't bore you, with what I was trying to say when this bell-boy interrupted us:

*

Now what I was starting to say was: I heard a story, here about a year ago, no, thirteen months ago it must be now – a story that I wanted to tell you gentlemen –

But oh say, before I start that, I want to explain –

I felt that Mr. Laks here, I felt he kind of wondered about it when I drew two cards, this last hand.

Well, here was the idea, and you may be interested in the psychology of it, and as Billy Dodd will tell you, there's no profession where you got to use more psychology than in the office-supply business.

Well, when I got this hand I figured that Mr. Laks –

Excuse me, Mr. Laks, for not calling you by your first name. I don't want you for one moment to think it's because I don't feel friendly, but what I feel is: The *first* time you

meet a guy, you ought to show you know your social onions by giving him his proper handle – shows you aren't one of these roughnecks – and then after that you can call him Pete or Pootch or Fat-ear or whatever his regular name is.

But's I was saying:

You remember that Simms was dealing. And do you know what I got? Well, I'll tell you. When I looked at my hand, I had the deuce of diamonds, the seven of spades, the king of clubs, the nine of hearts, and the six of –

Now by golly I can't remember – and I'm ashamed of myself – but I can't remember whether the fifth card was the trey of hearts or the trey of diamonds. But anyway, be that as it may, the point that I wanted to make clear is: I didn't have so much as one single solitary little pair in my whole hand.

So, thinks I, "Well, Low, you certainly got one swell-elegant grove of lemons here."

It kind of amused me –

What I always say is, intellect is always important, in its place, and industry, and even ideals, so long as they are thoroughly practical, but what is more important in life than a Sense

of Humour? And whatever faults I may have, certainly no one has ever been able to accuse me of lacking a Sense of Humour. And so –

Say, I hate to put Mr. Laks on to this; guess maybe it'll cost me a lot of money the rest of this game, but what he may 've thought was my being tickled by having such a good hand wasn't nothing but my being amused by having such a collection of tripe.

"He thinks," I thinks, "he thinks I've got a lallapaloosa here. I'll make him think I got three of a kind."

So when Simms calls for cards, I discards two cards –

*

(There are here omitted, by enthusiastic request of the entire staff of the publishers, two thousand words in which Mr. Lowell Schmaltz explains his interesting tactics in the rest of the hand. – EDITOR.)

*

But as I started saying :

I certainly do hate conversation during a poker game. That's the trouble with women; that's why it isn't any fun to play with 'em.

You get going on a game, and they want to stop and talk about kitchen-mechanics and kids and God knows what all. What I always say to Mamie is, "If we're going to *talk*, all right, we'll *talk*, but if we're playing *cards*, then let's play *cards*!"

But considering that we've been interrupted by having to send out for these new cards, I just thought I'd tell you this new story I heard about a year ago – story that a fellow named Mack McMack told me one time on a fishing trip.

Mack is, I may say, about the leading undertaker of Zenith, and one of the funniest clowns you ever listened to. Well, to make it short, Mack told us –

It seems – the way Mack told it – it seems an Englishman and a Jew and an Irishman got wrecked on a desert island. Now you boys just stop me if you ever heard this one. Well, it seems these three fellows –

But say, before I go on with the story, I think you gentlemen might be interested in hearing just where it was that I heard it. As I say, we were on this fishing trip –

And I've travelled all around, and I certainly

have seen a lot of the world, but I guess I'll never have a better time than I had on that trip. Here's how it all came about.

It happened I was attending a meeting of the Americanization Committee of the Zenith Chamber of Commerce. And say, whatever other honours may come to me, I want to tell you that I'll never take greater pride in anything than in having served on that committee, and when the Chamber of Commerce informed me that I was appointed to it, well, sir, do you know, I felt like saying, "Boys, I don't know that I'm worthy of this honour." And believe me, we certainly have done great work.

Just think of what real Americanization means to the future of our nation and thus to the whole world. And we tackled the problem –

Well, you take this, for example: There was a bunch of Hunkies working for the Zenith Steel and Machinery Company. They all lived near each other down in Shantytown and there was some doggone sorehead Bolshevik among 'em that insisted they keep up all these ridiculous and uncivilized customs they'd had back in Hungary (or is it Jugoslovakia? – wherever

it is that Hunkies come from) instead of reaching outward and upward and grabbing their chance to become real Americans.

Zabo, this fellow's name was – only I think he spelled it S-c-a-b-o, and I often laughed and said, "Well," I said to the committee, "this fellow certainly has got it spelled right, anyway," I said. "He certainly is one scab-oh, all right!"

Well, seems this fellow's shack was the centre for all the disaffection and lack of patriotism among that whole Hunky crowd. They'd meet there, and drink beer, and talk their own language, and dance a lot of fool foreign dances, and seems his wife was actually going so far as to get up a Hunky dramatic association and play a lot of these Hunky plays by Gorky or whoever this Hunky playwright was.

Well, we certainly put a stop to *that*, when the visiting nurse reported this state of conditions to us.

We went to Whitelaw Sonnenshine, the first V.P. of the Zenith Steel and Machinery Company – and say, there's certainly one fine, up-

standing, 100 per cent. American patriot – and he agreed with us and got busy at once. First, he fired this Zabo, or whatever his name was, and then we got the cops to pick up old Scabovitch on a charge of vagrancy the minute he was broke, and so we run him out of town, and I hear his wife got a job later as hired girl and got over all her damned nonsense, and when Scabby got killed in a steel mill in Gary, she married a real upstanding American named Harry Kahn.

And say, inside six months, once we removed this Bolshevik influence, those Hunks were dancing the Charleston just like you and I would, and they were reading the tabloid papers – maybe *we* may prefer more highbrow newspapers, but for them cattle, the pictures put over a message of Americanization they couldn't get no other way – and a couple of 'em had bought radios, and they were going to the movies, and in general getting so their grandchildren won't hardly be distinguishable even from yours and mine.

That's the kind of work we been doing on the committee, and this particular day I was speak-

ing of, we were having a meeting to settle the question of birth control.

Now there, gentlemen, is a very vexed question.

That all of us practise it is, of course, beyond dispute. But we're different, because we are, after all, when all is said and done, the rulers of this great democratic country. But when it comes to a question as to whether the masses and the lower classes ought to be allowed to practise it, why say, there you get into an involved economic problem that even a college professor couldn't hardly handle.

In fact, some says one thing and some says another, and that's the way it goes.

One faction claims that the superior classes like ourselves, in fact the great British stock, had ought to produce as many kids as possible, to keep in control of this great nation and maintain the ideals for which we and our ancestors have always stood, while these lower masses hadn't ought to spawn their less intellectual masses. But then again, there's them that hold and maintain that now we've cut down immigration, we need a supply of cheap labour,

and where get it better than by encouraging these Wops and Hunks and Spigs and so on to raise as many brats as they can?

Well sir, we certainly had one great old debate. One side invoked the sacred name of Roosevelt, with those undying words of his about Race Suicide – and then by golly if the other side don't go and take the very same words and prove they meant something just opposite!

I tell you, I guess when it comes to a question of practical affairs, like how you're going to have your store windows dressed or whether to put on a sale of pencil-sharpeners, I guess I'm about up to the general run and generality of thinkers, but this question was just a lee-tle mite beyond me. And I could see Joe Minchin felt the same, and say, of all the more important men of affairs in Zenith, there's mighty few that can hold a candle to Joe Minchin.

In fact, his name is one that to some extent has spread far beyond the local boundaries of Zenith, to every street and hamlet in the whole length and breadth of the land. Joe – and I'm mighty proud to be privileged to call him Joe,

and he never fails to call me Low – he's the president of the Little Titan Oil Cleanser Corporation, and say, if any of you boys haven't yet tried the Little Titan on your car, well, you take the tip from me and do so, that's all I've got to say. Naturally I'd always had a great reverence for Joe –

*

Oh here you are, son! My God, why didn't you take all night to bring up the cards? Got the White Rock? Oh you have, have you! Well, I didn't expect it. Well, here's a quarter for yourself, and you can go out and invest it in G.M.C. stock, but be sure to get the preferred.

Well gentlemen, here's the new cards, and now at last, thank God, we can get on with the game. But if you'll grant me just one more moment, I'd like to finish this story that Mack McMack told me. When you hear it I think you'll agree with me that it was worth taking out the time even from a poker game.

*

Well, as I say, just to get the background of the story straight, Joe Minchin and I were both on this Americanization Committee, and I could

see he got just as bored by this birth-control discussion as I did. So I kind of edged up near him at the back of the room, and I says, "How these birds do like to chew the rag! I like a fellow that can say his say and then shut up."

"You bet," he says. "Say, Low," he says, "I don't think you've ever seen my cabin up on Lake Misheepagontiluckit, have you?"

"No, I never have," I tells him, "but I've heard of it as one of the slickest and most elaborate log cabins in the state."

"Well," he says to me, "I don't know as it's so much-a-much, but a lot of architects and so on, and even the Reverend Elmer Gantry, that's travelled abroad, they've told me it wasn't so bad. Say, Low," he says, "I've been thinking about getting up a little week-end fishing party to go up there for the week-end, this week-end after next, now it's getting warm, and what do you say about going along?"

Here was this fellow, Mr. Minchin, making all his dough – say, I bet he don't make one sou less'n sixty or maybe seventy thousand dollars clear a year, and just as simple and unpretentious and not feeling he's one bit better than

you or me. Of course I told him I'd be tickled to death to come along, providing I could get the wife to let me check out, and so I starts off with Joe and his party – after, I must admit, a kind of a hell of a lot of talkee-talkee with the wife about it.

Now there's no point in my telling you who the other fellows on the party were – in fact I just want to tell you the story that Mack McMack told me, and then we'll get back to our game. But just to mention them, there was, besides Joe Minchin and me, there was Vergil Gunch, who's in the coal and wood business and one of the most influential business men in Zenith, and say, he's a great orator, and Depew LeVie, the lawyer, a very fine gentleman, graduate of the City College of New York – only trouble with him is, he's got such a down on the Jews that he makes you tired talking about it all the time – and Mack McMack –

And say now, when you're speaking of fine fellows, there's one of the finest.

Say, when Mack come into the undertaking business, they all just called themselves undertakers, but since he's been after them (because

for all his fun and natural high spirits he's got a mighty serious and idealistic streak in him), since he's been after 'em, and he proved it to me by statistics, 51·7 per cent. of them now insist on being called morticians.

And Mack was the first mortician in Zenith to put in really fine funeral parlours – or no, mortuary apartments I believe they're now called by the leaders of the profession. I saw 'em – not, thank God, because of any unhappy and unfortunate catastrophe in my own little family, but because when he opened up, Mack gave a reception, and we all went to see how lovely and at the same time efficient a funeral parlour can be.

Say, that place was a treat! It must be a whale of a comfort to some poor family that has got to plant one of its loved ones. The main funeral chapel is just like the most elegant private drawing-room, great big room with a nice fireplace and simple but tasteful pictures of scenery and kittens and so on, and lots of palms, and two canaries in gilded cages, and big fine overstuffed chairs, and a couple of brocade davenports long enough so's you could

sleep on 'em – not that you'd want to sleep on 'em in a place like that, of course – and a little anteroom where the bereaved family can sit in semi-privacy, fixed up by golly as nice as any boudoir, with a nice reading-table and on which are the latest *Vogue* and the *Western Christian Advocate* and the *Chiropractic and Abrams Method Quarterly* and a lot of serious but interesting magazines like that, and – and now here was a mighty touching touch that Mack himself thought up – with a pile of nice linen handkerchiefs for the bereaved, and all absolutely free.

And then the preacher was to stand in a lovely kind of a secluded nook, kind of like an old-fashioned sedan chair, I think they used to call 'em, and not stand right out and obtrude on the feelings of everybody while giving his last words about the deceased. And the coffin, or perhaps it would be better to say the casket, was to slide out of the back room into the chapel-drawing-room on a little electric trolley, as if by magic, untouched by human hands, thus giving, as Mack himself explained it to me, a feeling of awe and mystery.

Yes sir, not one thing lacking to soften and ameliorate those last sad rites.

And Mack certainly did give one crackajack reception to open those funeral parlours – or mortuary parlours.

After we'd all had a chance to look around, and sign the Visitors' Book, and a mighty neat volume, bound in rough calfskin, it was, too, he had the Y.M.C.A. quartette there to sing several suitable selections, like "Whither Away, O Autumn Swallow?" and "Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes," and then the Reverend Otto Hickenlooper of Central Methodist Church made some very interesting and thought-provoking remarks on what science and modern American efficiency could do to lessen the pangs of unavoidable grief and sorrow, and then orange sherbet and a large assortment of French pastry was served.

A high-class affair, in every way, and –

And *pay*?

Say, Mack himself told me that these funeral parlours, or mortuary apartment, paid for itself in less than seventeen months!

Why say, every undertaker in town bid for the

funeral of the Reverend Dr. Efflins, that was murdered by his hired girl, and Mack got the job solely and entirely, even though his prices was higher, because the widow appreciated the elegance of his funeral parlours. That's the kind of man of affairs *he* is!

*

And then finally the last member of our fishing party was no less a person than a professor in the University of Winnemac. You bet!

We all felt, even Joe Minchin felt, that he was kind of a notch above us, but Lord bless you, you'd never think it to meet him – just as simple and unaffected and slap-you-on-the-back as any of us.

Professor Baroot, prof of industrial sociology in the U, this was, but say, *that* guy, he never went at teaching with any of these old-fashioned stand-off methods.

He told me himself, he volunteered it, in fact, that he didn't give more than half of his time to teaching, and that because of his subject – it was his job to show the students that the great American industrial corporations can care for their men and prevent accidents and keep

clear of anarchists and labour troubles better than any small firm – as I say, because of what he taught, he was as thick as thieves with a lot of managers of big industries, and it was his job to keep in with those guys and get them to contribute to the University.

A mighty fine fellow. Belonged to the Rotary Club and the American Security League and the Klan – or rather he did till the Klan got unpopular – and the Moose and the Odd Fellows and the Key Men, and he could sing a good song or dance a clog, and say, he just about made up for all the old crabs on the University faculty.

Yes sir, he showed what an up-to-date and forward-looking professor can be. Why, he looked like a bond salesman!

So there was the bunch of us – Joe Minchin, Prof. Baroot, Vergil Gunch, Mack McMack, Depew Le Vie the lawyer, and yours truly, thanking you for your order and begging to oblige. And that's how we happened to go off together, and that's how I happened to hear this story that Mack told us, and I must hasten to finish it, so we can get back to the game.

Well, here was the story. As I said, if any of you boys have heard it, just stop me.

Seems there was this Englishman and this Irishman and this Jew – they were all a bunch of travelling salesmen or something like that. Anyway, whatever they were, it happened that they were all on a steamer that was sailing on the Pacific, and something happened to their ship, and anyway it got wrecked, and it was wrecked on a desert island, and when these three guys come ashore, they found that by golly everybody on the ship had been drowned except them and a girl they'd all been looking at on shipboard –

Say, I'll never forget the way Mack looked at us when he got to that point in the story.

He didn't say anything dirty. Naturally, Mack being an undertaker, it isn't proper for him to use common or improper language, but say, that fellow's just a natural clown. If he'd gone on the vaudeville stage, he'd 've made this Sir Harry Lauder look like seven cents. You could just *feel* those three birds were crazy about this girl –

By golly, I certainly did enjoy that story.

I'll never forget the whole background. It was one of the greatest nights I ever spent.

You see, if I may interrupt myself just for a second, we arrived at Joe Minchin's place – it's on Lake Misheepagontiluckit, which is in the northern part of the state, about four hours from Zenith –

No, let's see; it's less than four hours. I remember we left the Union Station at 2.37 in the afternoon; I remember it exactly because when I was leaving the house, the wife said I'd be late – and by golly she was sore about my skipping off and leaving her, and she sounded like she'd be tickled to death if I *was* late – and she said, "You'll be late catching the train," and I remember saying, "I will not," I said; "I've got exactly forty minutes, because the train leaves at 2.37, and it's now exactly three or anyway two and a half minutes to two." So I remember we left at 2.37 exactly, and we got to Lucknow, which is the station for Lake Misheepagontiluckit, at 6.17, and I remember that because it was just seventeen minutes after six, which makes an easy date to remember. So it was less than four hours.

But of course we had to take a couple of flivvers out to the lake – not taxis, you understand, because of course this Lucknow was a hick town; why say, it was such a rube burg that they didn't have a high school or a restaurant, and they only had one movie theatre and six garages, that's how raw *that* place was, regular jumping-off place – and we had to take a brace of flivvers out to Joe's cabin (if you could call a regular palace like that a *cabin*!) – and that must have took us half an hour, and so all in all, it was just practically four hours and maybe a little more from the Union Station in Zenith to his place, to be exact.

Well, we got in there, and we got ourselves a little supper – say, I used to lambaste college profs as not being practical, but Doc Baroot was the cook, and he took those canned pork and beans and added whisky and an egg to 'em, and say! man! that was a dish fit to set before a king.

And some good apple pie with evaporated cream on it, and of course plenty of gin and hootch to wash it all down. Man, we ate like a bunch of dukes!

Well, by the time we'd fed our faces and

washed up the dishes, it was about eight o'clock, and Joe says, "Well, say, boys, now we want to get a lot of rest and exercise and outdoor life while we're out on this trip, and what say we play poker till ten and then quit on the dot and get to bed and be up at six to-morrow and hike right out for the big gamey denizens of the deep?"

"Fine," we says; "you bet; we'll hit the hay at ten."

So we starts playing there in the big living-room –

Now by golly can you beat that! Can you *beat* it! I haven't described Joe's place at all, and that was the biggest surprise of all.

*

I knew he had a log cabin fixed up all swell, but I'd never expected the kind of place we found. Logs – yeh, sure, it was built of *logs*, but my God!

Why say, that place would 've done the Prince of Wales or J. Pierpont Morgan proud. Every log was varnished on the outside till it shone like a mirror, and every single last log had the end of it carved with the name of some

movie star. Then under the eaves, both ends, there was an elegant wood fretwork imported from abroad, carved like vines, with stars and crescents and snakes and wood roses all mixed up together.

Then inside, say, that living-room was two stories high, with a balcony running along three sides of it, and a lot of dandy Navajo rugs and college banners and banners advertising the Little Titan Oil Cleanser and Rotary banners and Coolidge for President banners and all like that hanging over the railing of the balcony – and of course I was especially glad to see the Coolidge banners, because, as Billy Dodd here knows, Coolidge and I have always been great pals, and I've had a high old time with him in the White House, talking about taxation and the situation in China.

And the furniture – say, Joe may be just one of your roughneck business men, but the imagination he showed about the furniture in that main living-room, which was also the dining-room, was something that just took your breath away.

Say, the fireplace was composed of every

sort and kind of stone to be found within forty miles of Lake Misheepagontiluckit, and also it had set into it a lucky horseshoe, and the golf ball that Joe won the Fathers and Sons Golf Tournament with, and the bottom of a bottle of red wine that he'd drunk in Paris – um, some of that real honest-to-God parley-voo red ink would go pretty good now, but you boys don't want to forget that we still got two complete bottles of real hootch left, just help yourselves and don't be shy, like the lady organist said to the deacon – and then it had, this fireplace, it had mortared into it a real genuwine cannon ball from Gettysburg, and the first dollar Joe ever earned, and the first nail driven into the Billy Sunday tabernacle in Zenith – which later became the Swiss Skating Rink and Boxing Arena – and a piece of iron from a radiator in the Vanderbilt mansion in New York that Joe was able to secure when the mansion was being torn down, and as he told me, it'd surprise you if you knew what he had to pay the workmen to get it, too!

And all the rest of the furniture was in keeping.

One of the chairs was made out of an ancient Spanish altar, and one was a genuwine Louis Cants chair from some palace or other in France that they say Napoleon sat in one time, and one was one of these basket chairs with a little roof over it that they used to have on the seashore, or so they tell me, and one was just a rough wooden bench made out of the timbers of a cabin in Kentucky that, and Joe has papers to prove it, Lincoln used to visit at when he was a young man.

And all over the room –

Say, by golly, there was more pictures and posters and banners and advertising posters than you could shake a stick at, and by golly, and now this was something you'd never expect in a northern cabin there among the aboriginal pines, by golly if he didn't have a real library, with Dr. Eliot's three-foot shelf of books and the complete works of Zane Grey.

So as I say, we certainly were living off the fat of the land, and we settled down to the game and –

*

Oh by the way, a funny thing happened. It

just happened that along about the fourth hand, or it may have been the fifth, I can't exactly remember just at the moment, but I remember Mr. LeVie was dealing, and by golly if he didn't deal me four jacks, and as I say, there I sat with four jacks pat. Well, I won't go into what happened –

If there's anything that bores me, it's these guys that insist on going into a post-mortem after each and every game, whether it's poker or bridge – or any other game, for that matter, you understand – and insist on explaining just why they did this or didn't do that. I often say to Mame, to my wife, "My God, play the cards, and let the other fellow draw his own conclusions!" But still, this was kind of a funny thing.

This Professor Baroot – or maybe I ought to call him Doctor Baroot; I understand he's a Doctor of Philosophy, and they tell me that's a mighty hard degree to get, not like one of these Doctor of Laws degrees that they just hand out to a bunch of bankers and authors and cabinet members and so on so's to get some dough out of 'em, but anyway, whether it's

hard to get or not, they tell me that no guy, no matter how smart he is in a teaching way, can ever hope to hit the higher and better-paid grades of teaching and research unless he can show the bosses at the college that he's got a Ph.D. degree –

But anyway, this Professor – or Doctor – Baroot was watching me, just like Mr. Laks was here just recently, and so I pulled a long mouth – say, I guess if you'd seen me, you'd 've thought Germany had won the war or I'd been unable to collect my biggest account. So I made up my mind I'd make out like I had a bobtailed flush, and fix my mind on that thought and put it over –

Because you can say what you like, and God knows I'm a good Congregationalist and not no New Thoughter or Theosophist or Swedenborgian or anything like that, but they can say what they like, a fellow – I mean if he's developed his own will-power, if a fellow *concentrates* on a self-conscious – subconscious, I mean – on a subconscious thought, and determines to think it into reality, the other guy is going to *get* it, see how I mean?

So naturally I draws one card, and I look disappointed as all hell, like I hadn't filled my flush or straight, and then when the betting started, I acts irritated, like I was bluffing, and sort of comes in reluctant. But then when Mack lays down an ace-high full, and I bangs down them four little jackses, count 'em, four – say, their faces certainly was a study!

Well, along about half-past nine, Joe Minchin springs a surprise on us. What do you think he brings out? What do you *think*! Nothing less than a real, genuwine, old-time bottle of pre-war Canadian Club.

Say!

These fellows can talk all they want to about the elegant port and claret and red wine and everything that they get abroad, but any fellow that *is* a fellow, he'd rather let some of that liquid gold run down his gullet than all the effeminate brands of European and French wine, and you take it from me!

*

And so –

Well, of course we'd agreed to quit at ten, but at ten the game was just going hot and

heavy, and Verg Gunch was losing and he said, "You got to give me my chance for revenge," and we agreed that after all that was only fair, and so we agreed to play till midnight and then quit and hit the hay.

Well, somehow or other, I don't exactly remember the details, at midnight we agreed to play till two, and at two we all said that after all, hang it, we were tired from our work in the city and we needed some recreation, and so we'd play till dawn and sleep all next day and get in some fishing late in the afternoon. So that was agreed. And then we had another little feed.

Say, that fellow, Joe Minchin, he certainly is one high roller.

You gentlemen would be surprised to know what he had in the larder there, ready against just such an emergency as this – of course it wouldn't have been safe to have left all that chow there in an uninhabited cottage if he hadn't had a caretaker, 'way off there in those trackless and uninhabited northern wilds, where any tramp might come in and help himself, but luckily there was a Norsky farmer living not

over a hundred feet away, just across the road, his name was Oscar Swanson, great big square-head farmer he was, had a son that worked on the section gang out of Lucknow, and his daughter had gone to business college in Winniwaka and was working for a firm of insurance agents in Winniwaka, mighty bright successful young lady, and Oscar kind of kept an eye on Joe's place, and so he had –

Say, it would 've knocked you for a loop to go into that pantry! Every luxury and necessity of the table, you might say – all canned, of course, but my God! No Roman feast that you ever read about or rather, probably, that you ever saw in the movies – had anything on that. Why say, there was canned chicken, and corned-beef hash, and sweet potatoes, and chop suey, real regular Chinese style, and pickled pigs' feet, and elegant mackerel, and a canned fruit salad that say, I'll bet it'd make the eyes of even a French chef bung right out – slices of peaches and pears and apples and cherries, in fact, two kinds of cherries – say, no Chicago hotel could shake you up a better fruit salad.

And he had crackers and real genuwine Scranton pretzels, too. Um! And so, as I say, we had a swell feed, and it was *then*, while we were sitting around feeding, that Mack McMack told us this story that I started to tell you.

Well! I'm afraid I've taken kind of a long time getting down to the story itself, but I wanted you to understand the background, so you'd understand the story better, and it's kind of a funny thing about me: I always did have a what the newspapers call a Dramatic Instinct.

*

I've always had a kind of sneaking feeling that I wouldn't have done so bad as an actor, if life hadn't called me into more serious and responsible affairs. Or maybe as a theatrical producer or playwright. Why say, when I was just a young fellow, trying to get along, as the fellow says, there was six or seven of us – or no, it must have been more than that; I guess in all, first and last, we must have had eleven or twelve different young men and ladies in the organization at different times, and we organized a dramatic organization, but amateur, you understand, and say, we put on

"Charley's Aunt," and "Box and Cox," and say, without wishing to hand myself anything, I must say I always got the best hand in the show – I got the audiences there at the church entertainment laughing fit to die.

Although in some ways I've often wondered if I wouldn't 've done better as a dramatist.

Some time when I get time – of course I haven't got the time for any such nonsense now; a man of affairs has got to be concentrated and not fritter his ideas away, and in fact, you might say, concentrate his energies – but I've thought that some time I'd try my hand at writing a play.

I've got a rip-snorting idea for a dramatic comedy play, too.

It seems this fellow, my hero, he's an American travelling abroad in one of these hick old-fashioned countries where they haven't got a bathroom or a cake of ice in the whole doggone country, but they got more grand dukes and all like that than you could shake a stick at.

Well, seems the Prince of Wales or whatever they call him, or prime minister or whatever he is that's heir to the throne, well, there's a plot

against him and he gets kidnapped, and come to find out, this American – he's a young fellow; I'd make him a newspaperman, I guess, though Delmerine – my daughter – she thinks he ought to be an aviator – well, come to find out, this American is the spittin' image of the fellow that gets kidnapped, and by golly they make out he's the fellow that's missing, and he gets crowned!

And meantime he's been knocked down to the chief princess around there, and she falls for him, and she thinks he's the real High Guy, see how I mean? But he won't marry her because he feels that would be playing kind of a dirty trick on her – see, you get a lot of complications and dramatic problems and so on, that way.

Well, you get the idea. It's one that a lot of folks have taken a crack at, but here's where I'll make my play entirely different:

Most authors, if they were doing that piece, they'd leave the poor American there in Uneeda or Nabisco or whatever you want to call this fool kingdom. And that would be agin all my American ideals, besides not being original. So what I plan to do is this:

He tells the princess what he really is, and they by golly chuck all their rank and get hitched and come back to America, and he makes good on the job and say, wouldn't that make a whale of a what they call a Dramatic Contrast – second act you show 'em there in the foreign palace, swell-elegant, all right, with tapestries and crystal chandeliers and big gilt chairs and all like that, but old-fashioned – my God, mouldy as a last year's bird's nest.

Then in the last act, you see 'em happy's a bug in a rug in a really snappy up-to-date modern American mansion.

At first I thought the scene ought to be in the parlour, but here couple of years ago I got an entirely new idea. What's more characteristic of American luxury than a real breakfast room? Put the scene in the breakfast room, with the folks at breakfast!

Make it a dandy modern sun-parlour, with nice light yellow curtains at the windows, and a red-tiled floor, and a canary in a Hendryx cage just singing his head off, and on the table you can see they've got an automatic electric toaster – this new automatic kind where you don't have

to turn over the toast but it does it itself automatically – and a nice bright shiny electric percolator, and they're passing the comment that it certainly is great to be eating real cornflakes and honest-to-God coffee and waffles and sausages and real Vermont maple syrup, see, instead of the awful chow they'd be getting in Europe – pickles and sauerkraut for breakfast, probably, and all like that.

Well, then, in comes the ambassador from this European country, and he says they want the hero to come back – they'll make him sure-enough king, but he says, "Nix, not on your life – just look around you," he says, "and use your own eyes, how's this for class and real sure-enough solid comfort." And so on – you know, a lot of discussion back and forth.

And then, say, if I do say it myself, I certainly got one knock-out last curtain. Just when the ambassador is arguing his head off – in comes the nurse with their little kid, just born!

But I'm getting entirely away from my subject, I'm afraid, and as I said, it was there at Joe's while we were having that little snack that Mack finally told this story I started to tell you,

and I guess it's up to me to repeat it and then shut up and we can get back to the game.

*

Well, as I started to say, seems these three fellows, this Jew and Mick and Englishman, were all wrecked on a desert island, and the only other person that was saved was this pretty girl, maybe she was a missionary, but say, she was a peach. On shipboard they'd all three tried to make her, but she was standoffish as all get out and wouldn't talk to 'em, but here where they were all sharing a couple of tents, she couldn't very well hand 'em the icy mitt, considering they were doing everything for her and building up a kind of – oh, a wall or a barricade or whatever it is that they always put up around your shack in these novels you read about people that get wrecked on a desert island, to keep off these wild beasts that they have on desert islands.

So she gets pretty chummy with the whole bunch of 'em, but she don't pick any favourites, and so one night these three guys and the girl are all sitting around the camp-fire, and each of the guys tries to pull a line that'd make this

Jane think he was *it* – that he was the cat's left auricle. (God, I wish you could 've heard Mack tell this!)

So they're sitting there around the fire, and the Englishman, he puts on his monocle, and he says to her, "Hy sy, me deuh, ayn't it simply something grand to think that you and me could establish a new dominion of the good old British Empire here in these waste places –"

Say, you'd 've laughed fit to split if you could have heard the way Mack took off that Englishman – just as natural as life – the intonation absolutely perfect, and the choice of words and everything. And same way when he came to take off the Jew and the Irishman. Perfect! Say, that fellow certainly is a natural-born comedian – whole show right in himself.

And yet I don't want any of you boys to think that Mack is nothing but a clown. Say, when it comes to a time of grief and bereavement, you can bank on Mack. He'll be as sympathetic and serious as any undertaker you ever saw.

I remember he had charge of the finest funeral I ever saw – I tell you it was a credit to

Zenith (and to Mack), that funeral – I'll bet Chicago itself never pulled off a more impressive and touching funeral. It was a Shriner funeral to one of the finest fellows you ever met in your life – Ed S. Swanson, the great divorce lawyer – why, they say Ed never took a divorce case in his life where he didn't get a favourable verdict, whether there was any grounds or not; a real crack lawyer that *he* didn't care what the law was – "I'll make the law and you furnish my fee," he used to say – but laughingly, of course, because he was a real square straight-shooter.

And one of the most public-spirited citizens in Zenith.

Why say, he was on the Better Interurban Trolley and Transportation Commission that got us several extensions of street-car lines to the suburbs – and while I guess Ed himself profited somewhat by advance knowledge of what suburbs these new lines were going to tap, still, that was only sensible, after all, when you look at it in the right way – *some*body had to make that profit, didn't they? And it had nothing to do with the fact that he put in some

mighty good licks on behalf of the body politic, and not one cent of pay for his services, you understand.

And he was one of the men most responsible for the Board of Education passing the act requiring a half-hour of Bible study in every school every day, and in forcing every school to start the day with prayer and the singing of "The Star-Spangled Banner" and the salute to the flag.

A fine fellow – one of the kind that makes our more progressive cities what they are to-day. And in private life, say, Ed was one of the most charming hosts you ever met – he'd fix you up an old-fashioned whisky cocktail that would just about make you see stars, and he could tell a smutty story, that bird, good as Mack himself, pretty near.

Well, of course the Shriners had to give a guy like Ed a bang-up funeral, and Mack ran it, and to see Mack *then*, with his black cutaway coat on, and to hear him speak to the unfortunate widow, say, you'd 've thought he was going to bust out crying. But it was a scream!

Just when he was looking so doggone down in

the mouth you wanted to boohoo yourself, he come over near me in the corner, and he gave me the comicalest wink you ever saw, and he whispers to me, "Oh, *do* we get a drink after this, dearly beloved brethren and sisters, or do we *not*? I'll say, fellow-Shriners and relatives, that we by God *do*!"

So that's the kind of fellow he was, real all-round guy, and so he goes on with that story, there that night, and he tells how these three are sitting around with this girl, and the Englishman he says if the girl and him could make a go of it, they'd by golly start a new department of the British Empire.

And then, as Mack tells it, while the girl's thinking the Englishman wouldn't be such a bad bet, after all, the Irishman speaks up – let's say his name was Mike – Mike he speaks up and he says:

"Now faith and begorra," he says to the girl, "now faith and begorra, with the blue eyes of yez and the cunning ways of yez, begorra," he says, "we could start a revolution in any new empire that Sandy here would be afther instituting!"

Well, that gets her pretty good, too, and she thinks maybe Mike is a little better on the Blarney stone than the Englishman is, and then up speaks the Jew, and say –

But first I want to tell you that poor old Mack certainly did have a hard time finishing his story. By this time, after we'd eaten, we'd all lapped up a pretty fair average amount of hootch, and we kept kidding him along and interrupting him, and along about here in his story, Prof. Baroot – say, he may be an elegant high-class scholar, but he's got just about as much pep and ginger and good-fellowship as any man *you* ever met, and he insisted before we heard the rest of the story, we ought to go out and have a swim.

No sooner said than done! Yes sir! Just like that!

Off with the old pants and lingerie and into the drink, and all acting up – there was enough moon still so we could just see, and there we was acting up by golly like a bunch of school kids, splashing water on each other and ducking each other and just generally raising Ned.

And then we got to singing like a regular

barber-shop quartet – only of course we were a sextet – and say, Prof. Baroot certainly did make a rip-snorting joke on that word sextet, but I'll tell you that later – and we all stood there bare-naked as Adam (and my God, what a tummy I found Vergil Gunch had been hiding out on us! – and maybe I wasn't so good myself!) – and we stood there and sang:

"Oh joy and oh bliss,
Home was nothing like this,
Yip ay-addee ay-yeh."

And it made us feel fine, getting a little exercise like that.

I tell you, there's an awful lot of fellows that, however intelligent they may be about business, don't realize and comprehend the need of exercise.

That's one thing to which I attribute my own success and the ability to think quickly and dispose of the day's rush of business without a lot of mental puttering: the fact that I take regular exercise. There's scarcely a day goes by that I don't walk from my office to the Zenith Athletic Club for lunch, and that's not less than a

half a mile each way, and every single Sunday from May to November I either have a good round of golf or I'm out driving in the fresh air.

So as I say, we all had a good swim that kind of cleared our heads up, and we were ready for the rest of Mack's story – about the good one that the Jew there on this desert island pulled after Mike and his lordship had shot their bolts.

Though I remember, just for a brief second, before Mack went on, we got into a kind of a discussion that I think might interest you gentlemen.

Somebody happened to mention the Ford, and somebody else, I think it was Depew LeVie, he turned to Prof. Baroot, and he says, "Say, Doc, I've got a real scientific question for you. Now that Ford's bringing out this new model of his, will it be proper to call that new model a *flivver*?"

Well say, that started us off. My God, we fought like a Democratic convention!

Some claimed one thing and some claimed the other, and one fellow got sarcastic and said,

"But how do you *define* a flivver, while you're arguing so much about it?" And so it went back and forth, and poor Mack, I guess it must 've been all of half an hour before he got back to his story.

So then he goes on.

Up pipes Mr. Jew, it seems, and *he* says –

He says, uh, "Oy, oy," he says to the girl, "if you and me vos married," he says, "ve'd – ve'd –"

Say now, by golly, that's funny! I can't to save my life remember just what it was the Jew said, and it's almost the whole point of the story!

Well, never mind. Prob'ly I'll remember it later. Anyway, it was a doggone good story, and you'd 've enjoyed hearing it, and –

Say, let's get on with the game! Are we playing poker, or *aren't* we playing poker!

PART III

YOU KNOW HOW WOMEN ARE

And I tell you, Walt, now we have a chance to sit down here by ourselves in your den and have a real chat – and say, from what I've seen, I don't believe there's a more elegant house for its size in Troy, and then of course you always were my favourite cousin, and one of the few people whose business judgment I'd trust and –

If you can see your way clear to making this loan, you'll never regret it. Business hasn't gone quite so good the last six months, as I admitted, but now I've got the exclusive Zenith agency for Zenith for these new cash registers – and say, what the cash register means, what it *means* to the modern and efficient conduct of business; it's almost, you might say, the symbol of modern industry, like the sword is of war – now I've got that, I can guarantee a big increase in turnover, taking one thing with another, and I want you to examine the analysis of my business with the greatest care.

And I certainly do admit all your criticisms,

and I'm going to ponder on 'em and try to profit by 'em.

I'm afraid I do get too kind of talkee-talkee during business hours, and maybe waste time and money. And I admit what you said about my college course. It's perfectly true: I didn't quit Amherst because my Dad died – fact, he didn't die till nine months after I was fired, and it's true I was dropped for flunking all my college courses, as you said – though I thought you threw that up to me a little unnecessarily; almost hurt my feelings, in fact; don't know that I'd 've stood it from anybody but you, but of course you always were my favourite cousin –

You see, I don't go around telling everybody that version of the story, because what I figure is, what they don't know won't hurt 'em none, and it's none of their business.

But it's not true, as you kind of hinted and suggested, that I didn't know President Coolidge in college. It's a fact that for some years I did have him mixed up with another fellow in our class that looked something like him, but here some time ago I happened to run

into this other fellow, and now I've got the two of 'em perfectly straight.

Why, I can remember just as if it was yesterday, Cal – as we used to call him – Cal and I were going into class together, and I says to him, "Cal, old boy," I said, "what's the Latin for 'battle'?" And he said – he said – well, he gave the word right out, without any hemming and hawing and beating around the bush.

But you're right, I do kind of get to talking too much. Henceforth I'm going to cut it short, and you'll never regret it if you put in that loan.

And I don't think that even you, with all the insight that you show into human nature, quite understand how and why it is that in certain moods I do run on a good deal. There's reasons for it. In the first place, I'm called on so constantly for speeches and oratory in Zenith – you've never been there and you couldn't understand, but –

Well, you take like this, for instance. I was attending a meeting of the Americanization Committee of the Zenith Chamber of Commerce, and we were discussing birth control.

Well, the chairman insisted I make 'em a long speech on the subject.

"Shucks, boys," I said, "you know just as much about it as I do," but they talked and they insisted, and they wouldn't let me go until I'd made a long spiel for 'em, summing up the arguments on both sides and, you might say, kind of clarifying it for 'em. See how I mean? But you, Walt, you just think of business night and day, and prob'ly that's a more practical way to think of it. But I get dragged into all these public and influential occasions and get kind of into a habit of oratory and philosophy, see how I mean?

And then –

I hate to say it, and there isn't another human being living, Walt, that I'd tell this to, and I want you to treat it as strictly confidenital, but –

The fact is, what really cramps my style is my wife.

*

That girl –

And in many ways I've got nothing but praise for Mamie. She means well, and as far as her lights lead her, she does everything she can for

me, but the fact is she don't quite understand me, and say, the way she drives me and makes demands on me and everything, why say, it just about drives me crazy.

And Delmerine same way. Thinking the Old Man's *made* of money!

And what I've done for Mamie – yes, and what modern American science has done! Think of the advantage of canned goods, of delicatessen shops with every delicacy from salads to cold turkey, all ready to serve without any preparation; of baker's bread without having to bake bread at home. Think of the electric dish-washing machine, reducing the work of dish-washing to, you might say, practically a minimum, and the vacuum cleaner, and what an invention *that* is! – no more sweeping, no more beating rugs –why say, the preachers can talk about these mysteries and all like that, but I guess in the vacuum cleaner America has added to the world *its* own mystery, that'll last when the columns of the Acropolis have crumbled to mere dust!

And then think of the modern laundries with their marvellous machinery.

It's true that they don't wash the clothes quite as good as my old mother used to – fact, they simply tear hell out of my handkerchiefs, and I always was a man to appreciate a high grade of fine linen handkerchief. But still, think of the labour-saving.

And so I've provided Mame with every device to save her labour, so whether it's a question of her telling the maid what to do, or during those comparatively rare intervals when we haven't got a hired girl and she has to do some of the work herself, she can get it all done in a jiffy, you might say, and be free for all the pleasures and self-improvement of leisure. She's free to play bridge nearly every afternoon, and also to give a lot of attention to her literary club, the William Lyon Phelps Ladies' Book and Literary Society, and get a lot of culture.

Now myself, I've always given a lot of attention to intellectual matters. Of course I'm right up on history – I've read clear through both Wells's *Outline of History*, or practically clear through it, and also Van Lear's *Story of Mankind*, especially studying the illustrations. And of course – maybe I'm a little rusty on it now,

but as a boy I used to be able to chatter German like a native, you might say, as my father often talked it to us at home. And now I'm kind of specializing on philosophy. I've read a lot of this *Story of Philosophy* by – I can't at the moment exactly remember the professor's name, but it gives you the whole contents of all philosophy in one book; and while these business cares have for the moment interrupted my reading the book, I expect to go right on and finish it.

But Mame, she has the opportunity to go ahead and knock all *my* culture into a cocked hat. Here recently her club had a very fine lecture about the excavation of King Tut's tomb, from a gentleman that had been right there on the ground – of course he couldn't go *into* the tomb, because nobody's allowed inside it except the excavating staff, but he saw the place at first hand, and my wife learned a lot about Egyptology from him.

And they've had a whole course in dietetics. She learned, for example, that the ordinary housewife uses more butter in cooking than is at all necessary – that while maybe butter may

make grub *taste* a little better, it doesn't add proportionately to the calories or whatever they are, and so she learned one way in which to economize. And my God, these days, what with the cost of gasoline and whisky and golf balls, a fellow has to economize on something.

So as I say, she has a chance to lead a free life and have a lot of dandy times, because I've provided her with all the household conveniences. But who paid for 'em? Where did the money to pay for 'em come from? From my toil and efforts, that's where it came from, and do you think I can get her to appreciate that? Not for one moment!

All day long I slave and work to keep her in luxury, and then when I come home at night all tired out, do I find her ready to comfort me? I do not!

I might as well not have a wife at all. And then when I try to make her understand what I've been doing – like telling her how hard I've worked to sell a new adding-machine to some fellow that didn't want it and maybe didn't need it, do you think she appreciates it? She does not!

Why, she always makes out like she wishes I was a doctor, or one of those he-lecturers that goes around spieling to women's clubs, or some darn' arty thing like that, and sometimes she practically up and says she wishes I could make love like one of those Wop counts, or a movie actor!

She says I just think of business and not of her. But I notice she's good and plenty glad to grab all the money I bring home from that business, all right!

It was –

Now I wouldn't say this to anybody else on God's green earth, and for heaven's sake don't you ever breathe a syllable of it, even to your wife, but I've been beginning to think here lately that it was all wrong with Mame and me right from the beginning!

Not that I'd ever do anything about it, you understand – even though I *have* got a lady friend in New York, simply a little darling and at least twelve years younger than Mame, too. But I don't believe in divorce, and then there's the children to think of. But it was all wrong –

I've learned a lot here lately. I've been studying and delving into psychoanalysis. Know anything about psychoanalysis?

Well, I do, and say, it certainly is a revelation. I've read almost clear through a manual on it—a very authoritative book written by a lady, Miss Alexandrine Applebaugh, that's a great authority on the subject, because she studied with a man that was a pupil of one of the biggest pupils of old Freud, and it was Freud that invented psychoanalysis.

Well, now I'll explain what pyschoanalysis is. It's like this:

Everybody ought to have a rich, full sex-life, and all human activities are directed toward that. Whenever a guy is doing something, it's directed toward making himself attractive sexually, especially if it's something big and important—no matter whether it's painting a picture or putting over a big deal in Florida town-lots or discovering a new eclipse or pitching in a World Series game or preaching a funeral sermon or writing a big advertisement or any of them things. On the other hand, when fellows like us *do* put over something, we want to be

appreciated, and we got a right to expect it, and if we don't get appreciated at home, we ought to find new mates, see how I mean?

Only you get into so doggone many complications and trouble and all that maybe it ain't practical, even with a cute girl like this one in New York I was speaking about – Ain't really worth it.

And then there's a lot in psychoanalysis about dreams. All dreams mean you ought to have a different kind of a wife – oh, they're *mighty* important!

And so now you'll understand psychoanalysis – as well as anybody does, anyway.

*

Well, as I say, now that I've mastered psychoanalysis, I can see things was all wrong with Mame and me from the beginning.

I was a young fellow, just come to Zenith, then, working in a wholesale paper house and living in a boarding-house out in the Benner Park district, and in those days that district was just like a small town. I met a dandy crowd of young people at the church and so on, and we used to have dances and picnics and sleigh-

rides and everything – rube stuff, but lots of fun.

Well, Mame – her father was in the roofing business, did a pretty good business, too, for them days – she was one of the jolliest girls in the bunch, but she was awful on the level. There was some of the girls in our crowd that you could get pretty fresh with—nothing wrong, you understand, or not hardly ever, but still when you was all cuddled down together in the hay on a sleigh-ride, you could hold their hands and maybe even pat their knees a little.

But Mame – never! No sir! Why say, she was so pure and religious that one time at a dance when I tried to kiss her, she slapped hell out of me!

So of course that just led me on. Made me think she was the living wonder.

Maybe if I'd known then as much as I know now, I'd 've known that it isn't so bad for a girl that you're going to spend your life with, intimate, you might say, to have a little of the Old Nick in her and not be so doggone adverse to a little scientific cuddling – within reason I mean, of course, you see how I mean?

Well, so we got married and she never did get so she liked –

I mean, she hints around sometimes and kind of hints that it's because I'm just a poor plain plug American business man that she's never warmed up. But my God, I've never had any encouragement! I don't expect I'd ever be any Valentino, any way, but how can I even begin to learn to show her a good time when she's always acted like she was afraid I *would* try to kiss her?

I tell you, Walt, I'm kind of puzzled. Sometimes I almost kind of wonder (though I wouldn't want to be quoted) whether with all the great things we got in this greatest nation in the world, with more autos and radios and furnaces and suits of clothes and miles of cement pavements and skyscrapers than the rest of the world put together, and with more deep learning – hundreds of thousands of students studying Latin and bookkeeping and doctoring and domestic science and literature and banking and window-dressing – even with all of this, I wonder if we don't lack something in American life when you consider that you almost never see an

American married couple that really like each other and like to be with each other?

I wonder. But I guess it's too much for me. I just don't understand –

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But I'm getting away from my subject. To return to Mame:

Aside from her apparently not wanting me to be anything whatsomever around the house except the guy that pays the bills and carves the duck and fixes the furnace and drives her car out of the garage so she can go off to a hen bridge-party, here lately we've got into kind of a bad way of quarrelling.

Well, here's an example:

We used to have dogs for quite a while after we were married, and I always did like to have a good dog round the house. Kind of gives you somebody to talk to when you come home and there ain't anybody around – just sits and listens while you explain things to him, and looks like he *understood*! But here about six years ago, just at a moment when we didn't happen to have a dog, somebody gave Mrs. Schmaltz – gave Mamie, I mean – a very fine expensive cat by

name Minnie – not exactly a full-bred Persian, I guess, but pretty full-bred at that.

But at the same time, even appreciating how much money she was worth, I never did *like* that damn' cat!

You see, we also had a canary, a very valuable little canary named Dicky, a real genuwine Hertz Mountains canary, and intelligent – say, there's those that say a canary isn't intelligent, but I want to tell you that that canary *knew* me, and when I'd stand near the cage he'd chirp just like he was talking to me.

He was a lot of comfort to me, not having a dog at that time – I was looking for a high-class English setter, and hadn't been able to find one at the price I felt justified in paying.

Well sir, here was a surprising thing. We fed that cat and fed her – I'd hate to tot up all the money we've paid out for milk and meat for that cat – but even so, she was bound and determined she was going to get at that poor little canary. She'd hang around underneath the cage and look up at Dicky, absolutely bloodthirsty, and one time when somebody (and I always thought it was Mame did it herself, too, and not

the hired girl) – when somebody left a chair right practically under the cage, Minnie lep' up on the chair and absolutely did her best to leap up and get at the cage.

Of course Mame and I had words about that –

And then that damn' cat never *would* be friendly, at least not to me.

I used to say to Mame, "Well, what does the fool cat *do* for its living, anyway? Think we're sent into the world just to loaf around and enjoy ourselves and sponge on other people?" I says.

Wouldn't sit in my lap – no sir, not for a minute. I used to get so sore at that cat that I'd kick it good and plenty hard, when nobody was looking – I showed it its place, by God – and *still* I couldn't get it to be friendly.

And we talked a lot about it, about the cat and the canary, and one thing often led to another –

You know how it is.

And when I talked about getting another dog, no *sir*, Mame wouldn't hear of it – said a dog would frighten her ittly, bittly, sweetsy,

bitsy, high-hatting, canary-murdering damn' *cat*, by God!

Well, I made up my mind that I was going to be master in my own household, but – Oh well, things just kind of floated along for several months, and I didn't do anything special about buying a dog, and then one day –

I remember just like it was yesterday. I'd been out to the country club for a few holes of golf – I remember I was playing with Joe Minchin, the machinery king, Willis Ijams, our leading – or certainly one of our leading – hardware dealers, and fellow named George Babbitt, the great real-estate dealer. But I was driving home alone, and I remember there was something wrong – car kept kind of bucking – couldn't exactly figure out what it was, so I stops the car right by the side of the road – it was late autumn – and I lifts the hood and I'm trying to figure out what's wrong when I hears a kind of whining and a whimpering, and I looks down, and by golly there's a nice water spaniel – not very old, not more'n say two or maybe nearer two and a half years old, sitting there and looking up at me so pathetic – say,

it was absolutely pathetic. And he held up his paw like it'd been hurt.

"Well, what's the trouble, old man?" I says to him.

And he looks up, so intelligent – By golly, I just loved that damn' tyke! Well, make a long story short, I looks at his paw, and way I figured it out, he'd cut it on some broken glass – but not bad. Fortunately I had some old but clean rags there in the door-pocket of the car, and so I sat down on the running-board and kind of bound up his paw, and meantime I noticed – and a good, high-grade dog he was, too – I noticed he didn't have any collar or licence or anything. And when I'd finished, doggoned if he didn't jump up into my sedan like he belonged there.

"Well, who'd you think you are?" I says to him. "What are you trying to do, you old hi-jacker," I says to him. "Steal my car? Poor old Pop Schmaltz with his car stolen," I says.

And he just curls up on the back seat and wags his tail, much as to say, "You're a great little kidder, but I know which side my meat is buttered on."

Well, I looks up and down the road and there wasn't anybody in sight that looked like they were looking for a dog, and there was only a couple of houses in sight, and when I got the car to acting Christian again – seems the carburettor needed a little adjusting – I drives to both these houses, and *they* didn't know nothing about no lost dog. So I says, "Well, don't like to leave old Jackie here – "

That's what I named the pup, and that's what I call him to this very day.

"I'd better not leave him here to get run over," thinks I, "and when we get back home, I'll advertise and see if I can find his owner."

Well, when I got home, Robby – you remember my boy, Walt – Robby was just as crazy about having a dog as I was, but Mame gets sniffy about how the dog'd scare that damn' cat Minnie of hers. But she let me keep Jackie, that's the dog, out in the garage till I'd advertised.

Well, I advertised and I advertised –

No, come to think of it, I guess it was just one ad I put in, because I thinks to myself, "Jackie looks to me like a regular man's dog,

and if his owner ain't keeping a look-out, can't expect *me* to do all the work!"

Anyway, never got an answer, and in 'long about a week, Mame wakes up and begins to realize, here I am with a dog that ain't going to be buddies with her cat – and say, was she right? Say, the first time Minnie comes pee-rading out on the lawn to see if she can't murder a few sparrows, Jackie, his paw was well enough for that, he takes one look at her, and say, honest, you'd 've laughed fit to bust; he chases her 'way clean up our elm tree, and keeps her there, too, by golly!

Well, after that, there was a hell of a powwow with Big Chief Wife, and no peace-pipe in sight. She gets me in the house, away from Robby, who'd 've backed me up, and she rides the wild mustango up and down the living-room, and throws her tomahawk into the tortured victims, meaning me, and she says:

"Lowell Schmaltz, I've told you, and if I've told you once, I've told you a hundred times, that Minnie is a *very* sensitive and high-bred cat, and I will not have her nerves all shattered

by being annoyed by a lot of horrid dogs. I want you to find the rightful owner of this horrid dog and give him back."

"Give who back? The owner?" I says, just sitting down and lighting a cigar and trying to look like I was amused and there was nothing she could do or say that would get my goat. And of course I had her there: "Give who back? The owner?" I says.

"You know perfectly well and good what I mean," she says. "And I want you to find the horrid thing's owner at once!"

"Fine!" I says. "Sure! Of course all I've done is to advertise extensively in the *Advocate-Times*, which only has more circulation than any other two papers in this territory put together – or so they claim, and I've looked into it and I'm disposed to accept their figures," I says. "But of course that isn't enough. All right, I'll just tuck Jackie under my arm, and start right out – Let's see," I says, "there's only about six hundred thousand people in Zenith and the neighbouring towns, within perhaps a twenty-eight or thirty-mile radius of City Hall, and all I'll have to do will be to run around to *each* of 'em

and say, 'Hey, mister, lost a dog?' That's all I'll have to do."

"Well, then, you can take the horrid beast out where you found him and leave him there," she says.

"I can, and I ain't going to," I says – flat. "I'm not going to have him run over by some damn' fool careless motorist," I says. "He's a valuable dog," I says.

"He's horrid – and he's terribly dirty. I never did see such a terribly dirty dog," she says.

"Oh, sure," I says. "Of course aside from the notorious fact that he's a water spaniel – and water spaniels being, even if they ain't at present as fashionable as cocker spaniels or wire-haired terriers or Airedales, merely notoriously the cleanest dogs that exist," I says, "aside from that, you're dead right."

"But we don't need a dog anyway," she says.

Well say, that kind of got my goat.

"No," I says, "sure we don't. I don't, anyway. Think what I've got here to be chummy with in the evening. Elegant! This nice, fluffy, expensive feline cat, that hates me like hell, that

won't sit in my lap, that cottons to you because you got nothing to do all day but stay home and pet it, while I have to be in my store, working my head off – to support a damn' cat! Fine!" I says.

But then I got serious, and after some remarks back and forth about how she *did* have things to do, like running the house and looking after my clothes and Robby and Delmerine – *you* know how any woman can make out like she works like a slave – after that I got serious, and I says:

"But seriously," I says, "when you come to look at it in a serious manner, what is a dog? What is a dog? What is he but man's greatest friend! Who so unselfish as a dog? Who so welcomes the weary man – yes, or woman, for that matter, if she treats 'em right! – when they come home weary from the day's labour? To say nothing of their being in many lands also useful in a practical way in helping to haul carts, also as watchmen.

"You forget," I told her, "all the wonderful things we've seen Rin Tin Tin do in the movies. Why say, I'll bet that dog's salary is higher than that of any film-author or even

camera-man. But aside from that, think of some of the dogs of history. Think of those brave Saint Bernard dogs, going out with little barrels of brandy under their chins to rescue belated travellers in that pass in Germany, or wherever it was – though I never could understand," I admits, "why there were so many travellers that kept taking a chance and getting belated in the snow that the monks had to keep a whole corps of dogs running to rescue them all the time. But still, that was in old historic times, and maybe things were different from now, and of course no railroads –

"But in modern times," I told her, "I've heard an anecdote, and I got it mighty straight, from a fellow who knew the fellow who was in the story, and it seems this fellow was a trapper or a miner or a prospector or something like that, anyway he had a cabin 'way off in the Sierras or some place like that – high mountains anyway – and seems it was the depth of winter, and this fellow's cabin was all snowed in, also the tracks and trails and all were deep buried in the snow.

"Well, seems this fellow had an accident,

slipped down a crevasse or something like that, and busted his leg, seriously, but he managed to make his way with great difficulty back to his cabin where his faithful dog, I never did learn the name of the dog, was waiting for him, and then as a result of the accident, he fell into a kind of fever, I suppose it was, and he lay there simply shot to pieces and in great suffering, and attended only by this faithful dog, who couldn't, of course, do much to help him, but he did his best, and he was a mighty smart, clever dog, and the trapper, or whatever this fellow was, he trained this dog so's he'd bring a match or a drink of water or whatever it was the poor devil needed.

"But there wasn't any way of cooking any food – it goes without saying that that was something the dog couldn't help him with – and the trapper got worse and worse, and he was in great pain, and you could see the dog was worried about what to do, and then all of a sudden, one day, by golly, the dog gives a kind of a short quick yelp, and he dives right through the cabin window, head on, and he's gone – not one sound from him.

"Well, of course, the poor devil of a trapper, he thought his only friend had deserted him, and he gave himself up to die, and it was almost as bitter as the pain itself to think that he'd been deserted by the only friend he had.

"But all this time, the dog was not idle. He goes lickety-split, following the snow-obliterated trails as if by instinct, 'way down an' down and down to the far-distant nearest village and comes up to the doctor's house, where he'd been once several years before with his master.

"Well, the door is slightly ajar, and the dog busts in and whines at the feet of the doc, who was at dinner.

" 'You get to hell out of here – how'd you ever get in here anyway?' the doctor says, naturally not understanding the situation, and he chases the dog out and closes the door, but the dog stands there on the doorstep, whining and otherwise trying to draw the attention of the doctor, till the doctor's wife begins to think something is wrong, and they cautiously let the dog in again and try to feed it, but it keeps tugging at the doc's pants-legs and refuses to eat

a single morsel, till at last the doc says, 'Maybe I'm needed somewhere, and come to think of it, this dog looks like the dog that that trapper had back in the mountains when he came here one time.'

"So anyway, he takes a chance on it – of course he hasn't got any more idea than the man in the moon where this fellow lives, but he hitches up his cutter, and the dog runs along in front of them, picking out the best road, and they come to this cabin, hours and hours from anywhere, and the doc goes in, and here's this fellow with the fever and busted leg in dire need. Well, he tends to him and gets him some chow and is all ready to move him to civilization when he thinks of this poor dog that's saved him, and he turns to find him, and the poor little tyke has crawled into a corner and fallen dead, exhausted by his terrible race for life!

"That's what dogs can do," I tell her, and then I tell her some other absolutely authentic anecdotes about dogs and we pass a lot of remarks back and forth, and final result is, she says all right; she'll stand my keeping the dog,

but he's got to stay out of the house, and I can build him a dog-kennel out beside the garage.

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But you know how things go. One morning I gets up early and has breakfast by myself, and there's Jackie whining outside, and I takes a chance and lets him in and feeds him, and that cat comes marching into the room like a Episcopalopian rector leading a procession, and Jackie gets one squint at her and chases her up on the buffet, and just then Mamie comes in and –

Say, I didn't stop with no buffet; I didn't stop till I'd reached the top of the Second National Bank Tower. But seriously, though she certainly give Jackie and me such an earful that –

Well, Joe Minchin had planned a poker party for that evening and I hadn't kind of intended to go, but Mame bawled hell out of me so at breakfast that later in the day I said I'd go, and I went, and I got lit to the eyebrows, if the truth be known – say, I was simply ossified.

So I comes home late, thinking I was both the King and Queen of Sheba, and then I got dizzy

and just about the time Mame'd thought up her adjectives and was ready to describe me for the catalogue of domestic sons of guns, I couldn't tarry, oh, no longer – I had to be wending my way into the bathroom P.D.Q., and there, say, I lost everything but my tonsils. Wow!

Well, Mame was awful' nice to me. She helped me back into bed, and she bathed my forehead, and she got some black coffee for me – only what I wanted was a good cyanide of potassium cocktail – and when I woke up in the morning she just kind of laughed, and I thought I was going to get by without the matrimonial cat-o'-nine-tails – I actually thought that, and me married over twenty years to her!

So when my head gets itself reduced to not more'n six or seven normal times its ordinary or wearing size, and I gets up for breakfast, not more'n twenty or twenty-two hours late, and she's still bright and – oh, God, what a blessing! – still keeping her trap shut and not telling me about salvation, why, I thinks I'm safe, and then just when I stagger up from breakfast and thinks I'll go down to my store, if I can remember where I left my garage last night, why, she

smiles brighter'n ever, and says in a nice, sweet, cool, Frigidaire voice:

"Sit down a moment, will you please, Low. There's something I want to say to you."

Well –

Oh, I died with my face to the foemen, I tried to take the barricades in one gallant dash, like Douglas Fairbanks. I says briefly, "I know what you want to say," I says. "You want to say I was lit, last night. Say, that isn't any news. By this time it's so old and well known that you can find it among the problems in the sixth-grade arithmetic book," I says. "Look here," I says, "it wasn't entirely my fault. It was that God-awful bootleg hootch I got at Joe's. It'd been all right if it'd been honest liquor."

"You were *disgusting*," she says. "If my poor father and mother hadn't passed away, and if my sister Edna wasn't such a crank about theosophy that nobody could live with her, I'd 've left you before dawn, let me tell you that."

Well, I got sore. I'm not a very bad-tempered cuss, as you know, but after along about

twenty years, this threatening-to-leave-you business gets a little tiresome.

"Fine," I says. "You're always blowing about how much you know about clothes. I'll be glad to give you a knock-down to some of the big guys at Benson, Hanley and Koch's," I says, "and probably they'll make you buyer in the ladies' garments department," I says, "and you won't have to go on standing for a gorilla of a husband like me."

And she says all right, by God she'll do it!

And we see-saw back and forth, and I kind of apologizes, and she says she didn't mean it, and then we really gets down to business.

"But just the same," she says, "I'm not going to have that dog in the house again! You've not got the least consideration for my feelings. You talk so much about your dear old friends, like this horrible Joe Minchin, but you never give one moment's thought to what I need or like. You don't know what the word 'thoughtfulness' means."

"All right, I'll look it up in the dictionary," I says. "And speaking of *thoughtfulness*," I says, "when I was going out last night, I found you'd

been using my safety razor and hadn't cleaned it, and I was in a hurry and you'd neglected – By God," I says, "when I was a boy, a man had his sweaters to himself, without his wife or sister calmly up and using 'em, and he had his razor to himself, and he had his barber-shop to himself –"

"Yes, and he had his saloons to himself, and still has," she comes back at me. "And you talk about neglect! It isn't only me you neglect," she says, "when you go and get full of liquor, and it isn't simply the example you set the children, but it's the way you neglect the church and religion," she says.

"And of course I'm only a deacon in the church," I says. You know – sarcastic.

"Yes, and you know mighty good and well you only took the job because it'd give you a stand-in with the religious folks, and every Sunday you can, you sneak off and play golf instead of going to church. And that morning when Dr. Hickenlooper came in from Central Methodist and preached for us – that time when poor Dr. Edwards was sick and couldn't preach himself –"

"Sick? He was sick like a fox," I told her. "He just had a sore throat because he'd been off on a lecture trip, shooting his mouth off before a lot of women's clubs to rake in some extra dough, when he ought to stayed home here and tended to his job."

"That's entirely aside from the question," she says, "and anyway, instead of listening to Dr. Hickenlooper like you ought to, you and a couple other deacons stayed out in the lobby of the church."

"Yuh, there's something to what you say," I told her. "Hickenlooper is a fine man. He's all for charity – providing some rich man provides the money for the charity. I don't believe he's ever smoked a cigar or had a nip of liquor in his life. He's a credit to the Methodist clergy. It's true he does bawl out his wife and his kids all the time, and it's true he nags his secretary all day long, but you can't blame a man that's busy with the Lord's work for being maybe a little irritable. In fact there's only one trouble with the holy man – he's the worst and most consistent liar in seven counties!

"I've heard him tell as his own experience

things I know he read in books, because I've seen the books. And here's a story that our own pastor, Edwards, told us. Seems Hickenlooper met him in front of our church one Monday morning, and Hickenlooper says, 'Well, Dr. Edwards, my brother-in-law heard you preach yesterday, and he said it was the best sermon he ever heard in his life.'

" 'Well, that's nice,' Dr. Edwards says, 'but it just happens that I didn't preach yesterday.'

"I guess I'm a kind of a blowhard," I says to Mamie, "and in general I'm just a plug business man, while Hickenlooper addresses Chautauquas and addresses colleges and addresses Methodist conferences and writes articles for the magazines and writes lovely books about how chummy he and God and the sunsets are, but say, if that holy liar knew what poor ordinary business men like me really thought about him and what they said privately, he'd sneak off to a desert and never open his mouth again!"

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Well say, that had Mamie wild – and don't you think for one moment, Walt, that she let

me get by without a few interruptions that I haven't put into the story. And what I've just told you about this Hickenlooper bird – he looks like a prize-fighter and talks like a glad-hand circus bally-hooer, and he lies like a politician – was all straight, and she knew it. I've done a little lying myself, but I've never made a three-ring circus of it like him. But Mamie had a sneaking kind of admiration for him, I guess because he's big and strong and a great baby-kisser and girl-jollier. And she let loose on me, and what she said – Whee!

She said I encouraged Robby to smoke. She said I never used an ash-tray – always scattered my ashes around the house – and I'm afraid she had me there. And she said she was sick of having my friends around the house all the time, and I bawled her out for high-hattin' 'em, and she said something about my driving too fast, and I come back with a few short sweet words about back-seat driving – she's the best single-handed non-participating Major Seagrove of the entire inhabited world. And –

And so on.

And that's just typical of a few home Board

of Directors conferences we been having, and I'm pretty sick of it.

Not but what I'm just as mean as she is, at that, I suppose.

But I did, by God, keep old Jackie!

But I'm getting sick of the whole business –

Not, you understand, but what Mame is just as nice a pal as you'd want to find, in between tantrums. That time we were here and saw you and then went on and had our long talk with Coolidge in Washington, she was jolly the whole time. But more and more –

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Say, I don't know as I ought to tell you about this, hardly, but this girl I was speaking of in New York – well, she isn't exactly a girl any more, but she's only thirty-eight and that's seventeen years younger'n I am – Erica, her name is, and say, she's one of the most talented little women I ever met.

By rights, she ought to be a world-renowned portrait-painter, but she's always run into the damnedest hard luck, and just now for a few years she's been working for the Pillstein and Lipshutz Christmas and Easter Greeting Card

Company, where I always get my greeting cards. Of course by rights I'm not a stationer and I stick right to office supplies, but same time, along at these holiday times, I feel it does kind of brighten up the business to stock a few handsome cards, and pay – say, it brings me in hundreds a year.

Well, Erica designs a lot of cards – *darn*' smart intelligent girl – does the drawings and the poems and the whole thing. Say, you've probably seen some of her cards. It was her that wrote that famous one that had such a big sale – the one with the two fellows shaking hands in front of an old schoolhouse, and then a lot of holly and so on, and the poem:

"Dear friend, this season of ice and snow
Does not make love the colder grow,
But on contrary pries apart
Wider the cockles of the heart.

'Tis years since we were boys together
In jolly winter and summer weather,
'Tis years indeed since we have met,
But our old friendship I'll ne'er forget."

Say, it'd surprise you how many of those

cards a lot of hard-boiled old business men buy to send to fellows they haven't seen for years. I tell you, that fellow Manny Pillstein is a genius. Of course there've been greeting cards for years, but he was the first one to put the business on a scientific, nationally advertised basis, and really standardize and Fordize all this Holiday Good Will so it'd amount to something. They say he's increased the business 10,000 per cent. – made it as practical as chain grocery stores or even Mother's Day.

Well, I met Erica there at his place, and I was alone in New York, and I invited her to dinner, and I blew her to a nice little feed with a bottle of real domestic Chianti. Well, we got to talking and telling our ideas and so on, and come to find out, poor kid, she was pretty near as lonely in New York as I was.

And then every time I blew into the Big Burg – alone – I'd see her, and –

Now say, her relations and mine was just as pure as the driven snow. Maybe I'd kiss her in a taxicab or something like that, and tell the truth I don't know how far I'd 've gone if I'd got her off to Atlantic City or something like

that, but my God, with my position and my responsibilities, both financial and social, I didn't want to get into no complications. To tell the truth (and I'd never tell another living soul but you), one evening I did go up to her flat – But only that once! And I got scared, and after that I just used to see her at restaurants.

But be the cause what it may, our relations were entirely and absolutely friendly and intellectual, and know what she told me?

When I told her what I thought of her work – and to me, and I told her so, she's the best greeting-card artist in the country – she told me my appreciation was the greatest encouragement and the greatest incentive to go onward and upward to finer and better art that she'd ever received! And let me tell you, I've never had anything buck *me* up, in turn, like her appreciation of my appreciation. Whereas at home –

If I try to tell Mame that she plays a good mitt of bridge, or that I think she's got on an elegant new dress, or she sang some song at some church affair real pretty, or like that, she just looks like she was saying, "Who the hell ever told you *you* was a connooser?"

Oh God, I suppose we'll always go on, just about the same way, but if I was younger –

Well, I ain't!

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Well, Walt, I guess it's getting late and about time for us to turn in – you'll have to be in your office to-morrow, and I think I'll take that 12.18 for home, if I can get a Pullman.

It's been a mighty great privilege to have this frank talk with you. I certainly will take your advice. I'll try to keep from talking and running on so much – you noticed this evening at supper I hardly said a word, but just listened to your good wife. You bet. I've learned my lesson. I'm going to concentrate on selling the goods, and not discuss subjects and topics all the time.

And I hope you'll give my schedule a mighty close once-over and see your way to advance me the loan.

You remember how I've always turned to you. Remember that month I spent with you boys on your granddad's farm when we were 'long about twelve?

God, what fun that was! Regular idyll, you

might say, like a fellow can't touch again in these later care-ridden and less poetic years. Remember how we stole those mushmelons from that old farmer, and when he got sassy about it we went back and smashed all the rest of 'em? Remember how we hid the alarm-clock in the church so it went off during the sermon? Remember how we greased the springboard so's that Irish kid slipped on it and almost busted his back? Gosh, I had to laugh!

Oh, those were great days, and you and me always did understand each other, Walt, and don't forget that there's no firm in the world could give you better security for the loan.

PART IV

YOU KNOW HOW RELATIVES ARE

Well, by golly, it's good to be back. How'd everything go, Mame? Say, how's the brake on your car been acting? That's fine.

Huh? Yuh, sure, I'm fairly certain Walt'll make the loan. But you know how relatives are. I could see he was crazy to make a loan on security like I can give him, but he tried to pretend like he was holding off, and I had to sit around a whole evening listening to his wife and him chewing the rag.

God, how that woman does talk, and say, Walt ain't much better. He insisted on telling me all about a fishing trip he'd made, and of course I wasn't interested –

And curious – say, I never did run into anybody as inquisitive as Walt is, but you know how relatives are. My God, the questions he asked and the hints he threw out? He wanted to know whether you and I ever scrapped or not –

Well, just take an example. I happened to mention Jackie, and he says, "Does Mame allow you to keep him in the house?"

Well, I just looked at him, and I said, kind of cold, "Mame and I have both agreed that the house is no place for a dog, for his own sake, and that he's much better off where he is, out in a dog-house by the garage."

And one thing almost got my goat. He said, "Say, on all these trips you make to New York, haven't you ever picked up a nice little piece of fluff?"

Well, I just looked at him, quietly, and I said, "Walt," I said, "I never could see the necessity for a man that's married to the finest little woman God ever made to even *look* at any other woman. A fellow like that," I said, "he naturally wants to keep all that's finest in him for the one woman who has consented to share his fortunes and keep him happy."

And you might remember that I told Walt that, too – here the way you hint around sometimes and wonder if I don't go taking girls out to dinner when I'm in New York.

And when you consider what I told Walt

about Jackie, I'm damned if I can see any reason why just *once* in a while you can't shut that cat in the kitchen and allow Jackie in the house. But what I'm getting at: I wish you could have listened in and heard me when I was talking to Walt about you. If you heard *some* men gassing about their wives –

But let that pass. I'll just tell you briefly about the trip.

I caught the train all right, with three good minutes to spare, and I had my dinner on the diner – it wasn't such a bad dinner – I remember I had vegetable soup and fried chicken and fried potatoes and corn and a wedge of apple pie with whipped cream on it – say, I wish you could get that Lithuanian to stir her stumps and whip some cream for us once in a while – my God, what does that girl think we're paying her sixty-five good dollars a month for! – and then I went up in the club car and sat down to smoke a cigar, and I got to talking to a gentleman, and he'd been reading a book about "Microbe Hunters," and he told me a lot about germs and bacteria that was very interesting.

Did you know that bacteria multiply at the

rate of – I think it's ten thousand an hour – no, a million an hour it is, if I remember; anyway, at a rate of speed that would simply surprise you, and that, you see, explains about a lot of diseases.

And I got to talking to this gentleman, seems he was a lawyer, and he just happened to mention that he came from Brainerd, Minnesota, and I asked him if he happened to know Alec Duplex, of Saint Cloud, Minnesota – you remember the gentleman that we met in California – and say, come to find out, this gentleman was a second cousin of Alec's! Can you beat it!

"Well sir," I says to him, "the world's a pretty small place after all, isn't it!"

Well, along about nine o'clock I thought I'd turn in and try to get a good night's sleep – though it's a funny thing about me; as I may have told you, first night on a sleeper I can't hardly sleep at all; but I thought I'd turn in and try it, and come to find out, the porter had my bed all made up and so I crawled out of my clothes and wound my watch and crawled in between the sheets –

But I won't go into details of the trip – there was nothing of especial interest except this remarkable coincidence about this gentleman, a Mr. McLough his name was, that was a cousin of Alec Duplex's, but say, there was one thing:

At breakfast in the morning, I thought I'd try some buckwheat cakes, and I said to the waiter, "I think I'll have some buckwheat cakes," I said. "And syrup."

"Sorry, sir, we ain't got any buckwheat cakes this morning," he says.

"You haven't got any buckwheat cakes?" I says.

"No sir, there ain't any buckwheat cakes on the menu this morning," he says, "but we got corn cakes."

"Well," I says to him, "if you haven't got any buckwheat cakes –"

PART V

TRAVEL IS SO BROADENING

WELL, I want to tell you, Mrs. Babbitt, and I know Mrs. Schmaltz heartily agrees with me, that we've never enjoyed a dinner more – that was some of the finest fried chicken I ever tasted in my life – and it certainly is a mighty great pleasure to be able to just have this quiet evening with you and George. Personally, I'm just as glad the Reverend and his wife couldn't come. I yield to no one in my admiration for Reverend Hickenlooper – as you say, there's probably no greater influence for Christian manhood in Zenith – but it's mighty nice to be able to have a quiet chin with you and George.

*

Now, George, about this trip to the Yellowstone you were asking about.

I don't know as I can help an old, trained, long-distance motorist like you, with your wealth of experience, though I never did agree with you about not going into low gear in descending steep hills, but I guess you've got

me beat on long-distance motoring, and I've often said to Mrs. Schmaltz – haven't I, Mame! – that there sure is one thing I envy George F. Babbitt for, and that's the time he drove three hundred and sixteen miles in one day, between dawn and midnight. But I don't pretend to have that magnificent physical make-up of yours, George, and I've never been able to stand more'n two hundred and ninety-eight miles in one day's tour, and, you might say, really enjoy it and feel I was relaxing.

But same time, any helpful information that I can give you that may be of help to you on your trip, if you decide to make it next summer, I'm certainly mighty glad to give you, if you find it helpful.

Now I myself, I didn't quite get to Yellowstone Park. You know, it's a funny thing how many folks in this man's town think I drove clear from Zenith to Yellowstone Park. Personally, I've never claimed anything of the kind.

It's true that when I gave my little talk before the West Side Bridge Club about my trip, they billed it – and in a brief way the West Side

Tidings column of the *Evening Advocate* spoke of it – as an account of a trip clear to Yellowstone Park.

But it wasn't a trip clear to Yellowstone Park. The fact is, and I've always been the first to acknowledge it, I didn't get clear to Yellowstone Park but only to the Black Hills, in North Dakota.

The fact is, not only did I want to see the scenic and agricultural wonders of Minnesota and Wisconsin and Dakota and all like that, but Mame has a brother-in-law – I'm sure Mrs. Schmaltz will excuse me for speaking of family matters, in the presence of old friends like you two – and she has this brother-in-law that had met with misfortune, and one of the objects of our trip was to stop and see if we couldn't help him straighten out his affairs – why say, the poor devil was in such stresses and difficult straits that he'd actually had to borrow money to help him carry on his business, he's in the drug and stationery business. Why say –

And a mighty fine gentleman he is, and his wife is a mighty bright cultured little woman; she subscribes to the *Ladies' Home Journal* and

reads it right through every month. And poor old Lafayette – that's Mrs. Schmaltz's brother-in-law's name – he was very well educated; he not only went through a pharmacy college and got his degree, but he also studied cost-accountancy by mail. But somehow he just couldn't make a go of it. I guess he was kind of a dreamer. When he started his first drug-store, he also took an agency for the Florida Transplanted Palm and Orange Tree Company, and in Dakota he couldn't hardly sell any palms at all – those Swede farmers may be all right as farmers, but they ain't up to the cultural point of palms yet. And then later in another town he went into partnership with a gentleman that had found oil there, and also wanted to start a radiator factory –

And say, that wasn't such a bad idea as it sounded. Of course this was in a town where there wasn't any iron or coal anywheres around, and the railroad connections wasn't very good, but still, it was cold as hell – excuse me, Mrs. Babbitt – it was awful' cold in the winter, and where do you need radiators as much as where it's cold? But still, things didn't work out quite

right. Come to find out, there wasn't any oil in the oil field, and somehow the radiator factory couldn't seem to compete with the trust, and so poor old Lafayette lost money almost as fast as he made it.

So when we drove out to see him –

You know how bad luck besets the just with the unjust, and say, by this time, poor old Lafe and his wife were so hard up against it that they didn't even have an automobile!

And their radio was so old and so cheap that they couldn't hardly get Minneapolis on it!

Well, that'll give you an idea about how miserably poor and pursued by ill-fortune they were – they lived in Tomahawk City, North Dakota.

Well, so, to make a long story short, Mame and I went to see him, and I gave him what advice I could, and then we ran on and gave the Black Hills the once-over, but we didn't have the time to make Yellowstone Park, but still, that was only four, or maybe it might have been six or eight hundred miles farther on, so I can give you practically a detailed description

of the road and stopping-places and so on for the whole distance.

*

And say, I certainly do recommend your making the trip. They can say what they want to. Some people claim that reading books is the greatest cultural influence, and still others maintain that you can get the most in the quickest split-second time by listening to lectures, but what I always say is, "There's nothing more broadening than travel."

Well, now you just take this, just for an example: When I crossed Minnesota, I found – in fact I saw it myself, first-hand – that there were as many Swedes as Germans there. And funny names – say, they certainly had the funniest names! Swanson and Kettleson and Shipstead, and all like that – simply screams. I says to Mame, "Well, Mrs. Schmaltz," I says – I often call her that when we're funning around – "Well, Mrs. Schmaltz," I says, "you wanted to get a kick out of this trip, and here you got it," I says, "in all these funny names."

And all like that.

We get to thinking, here in Zenith, that every-

body, I mean every *normal* fellow, lives just like we do, but out there in Minnesota I found a lot of the folks never even heard of our mayor here in Zenith – they just talked about Minneapolis and Saint Paul politics! I tell you, travel like that gives a fellow a whole new set of insights into human character and how big the world is, after all, and as our pastor, Dr. Edwards, often says, the capacity of the Lord for producing new sets of psychological set-ups is practically, you might say, absolutely unlimited.

*

Well, so I'll give you the main, broad outlines of the trip. Considering that it must be about two thousand miles from here to Yellowstone Park, naturally I can't go into details, but just suggest the big towns that you want to make for, and general cautions about long-distance touring if you're going to do it scientifically.

*

Yes, thanks, I'll have a cigar, but I'm not drinking anything. Well, make it very mild. Fine, that's fine. After all, as I often tell my boy, Robby, since prohibition *is* a law of the

land, we ought to drink nothing at all or only very little. That'll be fine. Whoa-up! Well, since you've poured it, can't waste it, eh? Just a little siphon. Fine! Attaboy!

*

Well, as I say, I'll make it short. We started out for Dakota, just Mame here and me – the children was busy with their schools and study –

I don't know if I've told you, but Delmerine has found she had more kind of talent for painting than for music, though to me she's got one of the nicest voices I ever heard in so young a girl, but she was informed by some of the best authorities that she'd do even better at art than at music, so she switched to the Art Institute, and Robby had to sort of make up some extra courses this last summer –

But not to go into that, the point is that Mame and I started off just by ourselves.

Now I hope Mame will excuse me – she knows how I like to kid her now and then – but what I mean is, just about when we were ready to start, she got an idea it'd be a good idea to take along her old Aunt Sarah, that lives out here in Rosedale.

"Let's take Aunt Sarah along, and give her a good time," she says.

"Let's take who along and do what?" I says.

"Why, let's take Aunt Sarah. She hasn't ever been anywhere," she says.

"Fine!" I says. "Say, that'll be just elegant. Let's also and at the same time take along the St. Agatha Orphan Asylum, the Salvation Army, and the convalescents of the Zenith General Hospital," I says, "so we can have a really chummy time."

Well, with Mame here, I can't very well tell you all the remarks we passed, but anyway, we shoved Aunt Sarah into the discard – say, that old girl whistles through her teeth, and the only time she ever was kissed was when Brigham Young passed through here ninety-two years ago – but by golly, I got to admit it, Mame got back at me.

I'd had a kind of sneaking idea I might work in Jackie, our dog – and a mighty fine useful dog he is, too – but I had to swap Jackie for Aunt Sarah, and so we started off with nobody aboard except Mrs. Schmaltz and me.

Now I know that the first question you'll

want to ask me is what kind of an outfit you ought to take along on a trip like this. I don't pretend to be any Ammunsun, and if I've ever found any South Poles, the newspapers forgot to tell me about it. But I'll give you my own experience for what it's worth.

Now about clothes –

There's those that maintain a fellow on as long and you might call it adventurous trip like this had ought to just wear an old suit of regular clothes. And there's those that maintain you ought to wear corduroy. Say, many and many's the hour I've sat in on debates between these two schools. But as for me, say, give me a nice suit of khaki coat and pants, every time. It may get dirtier than hell, but it never shows it's dirty, so what difference does it make?

And Mame the same way. She had specially made up for her a nice khaki jacket and breeches, and while sometimes she used to worry, and ask me if it didn't make her look the least lee-tle bit broad in the hips, I used to say to her, "Hell –" Excuse me, Mrs. Babbitt. "Rats," I said to her, "if you're comfy in 'em and if you find 'em convenient for crawling through

barb-wire fences and all like that, whose business is it," I asked her, "whether some folks think it makes you look broad amidships or not!"

Now, Mamie, don't you go giving me those dirty looks, because remember we're right in the bosom of the family, you might say.

And now here's one thing I found mighty important.

Aside from the regular shoes that you wear when driving – and they ought to be a good stout pair of shoes, because who knows when you may want to sneak into an orchard and steal some apples, or even go up on a hill to see a view, or something like that – you ought to take along a pair of easy shoes for the evening – also more elegant; show 'em when you arrive in one of these hick hotels that you may be dressed comfortable for the auto trip, but back home you can dress just as good as the next fellow, and maybe better.

Personally, I was awful' fortunate. I had an old pair of pumps, and I had 'em blacked up and they looked almost practically as good as new.

Funny, I'll never forget buying those pumps.

Here's the way it happened:

I was in Chicago, on a business trip, you understand, and I happened to be wandering along South State Street, in the poorer section, and I come on a bargain sale of shoes and footwear, and I spotted these pumps, and they looked pretty good to me. And the fellow that owned the store, but he was a Kike, you understand, he come out, and he says – of course he spoke practically illiterate – and he says to me, "Hey, mister, I vill sell you dem shoes cheap" – you know how those fellows talk.

Well, I just looked at him in a kind of amused way, and of course I could see that he could see I wasn't the kind of ignorant bird he was accustomed to deal with, and I says to him, "Ah, so, my friend," I says, "so you'll sell them to me cheap, will you!"

"Sure," he says, "you bet; I'll let you have dem at a rock-bottoms price."

"Well, friend," I says to him, "I'm sure that's awful' nice of you, but what makes you think –" And I just kind of laughed. "What makes you think," I said, "that I require any such articles of footwear?"

"Vell, I can tell dat you're a gentlemans that puts on a dress-suit frequent, and dese is real dress-suit shoes," he says. "Dey come from the bankrupt sale from the real bon-ton élite store from Chicago," he says, "in fact from Waffle-heim and Spoor, and they're too good for my class of custom," he says.

Well sir, just out of idle curiosity, I looked 'em over, and upon my word, if I didn't think he was telling the truth, for once. Say, them pumps, if they was what they looked like they was, wasn't worth one cent less than fifteen bucks, or anyway twelve-fifty. Well, of course I got kind of all excited inside. I knew then just how this Doctor – well, whatever his name is that writes for the *Saturday Evening Post*, I knew just how he feels when he finds a first edition of Harold Bell Wright for a dollar and a quarter and later maybe he's able to sell it for a couple thousand.

Well, I tried not to look excited, and I said, casual, I said to him, "Well, brother, they look like they were about my size, and I'll give you two bucks for 'em."

Well, sir, you'd 've laughed if you could 've

seen him go up in the air. Say, he just clawed the air. He hollers and shouts and he claims they're worth five-fifty. You know how these doggone foreigners carry on – and say, if you're a student of philosophy you'll realize that their actions also indicate an inner spiritual something, you might say, that indicates why they can't ever compete with the clear, sure, short-cut mentality of the Nordics. He waves his hands and –

Oh, you know.

But say, I'm afraid I'm drifting away from my subject a little. Fact is, I jewed him down, and I got 'em for three and a half, and say, they fitted like a glove, and I wore 'em at some of the finest parties and soirées in Zenith for five years, and then when we started on this Western tour, they were just the thing to take along to rest your feet in the evening. And be sure and take something like that – stylish but restful.

*

Now as to your auto equipment, George.

You want to have a Pull-U-Out or some other device for getting you out of a mud-hole if you get stuck in it. It's perfectly true that

wherever you go now, motor-touring in the United States, you find perfect cement roads. But sometimes – You know how it is. Here and there there's gaps in the perfect cement highway, and you will get stuck in the mud.

And of course you want chains along, and extra tyres. And what I recommend especially is one of these stoves with solid alcohol. When you're touring, you get a little tired of restaurants where you can't get anything but a small steak and beef stew; fact is that sometimes you'd like a little *food*, and if you happen to feel inclined that way, of course the only thing you can do is to cook it for yourself.

In 'most all these small towns you go into a place – well, outside it's got a big fine illuminated electric sign with "Eats" or something like that on it, so you think it's going to be a snappy up-to-date joint, but you get in and you find it's run by some retired farmer and his daughter and the old woman.

Pop's principal job is leaning on the cash register and annoying a toothpick. He's too busy thinking about what a civilized guy he's become to do any work except play cashier –

with six customers an hour! – or maybe he's admiring all the art treasures in the place – the snappy picture of two pears and a lobster, and the signs like "Watch Your Hat and Coat," and "No Trust, No Bust," and "Ham and Eggs Country Style, 20¢" – country style meaning they throw in a piece of Certain-teed asphalt-treated toast with the relics.

Then out in the kitchen is Ma, doing what she thinks is cooking. The only thing she don't burn is the drinking-water. And Daughter has the idea she's waiting on table. But Daughter ain't interested in anybody but travelling salesmen that she thinks are unmarried – which no travelling salesman is since God made little apples. And all over the place there's a nice pleasing odour of burnt steak and onions.

So you sit up on a nice high stool, that's cleaned regular once a day by wiping it off with the rag that they use to grease the griddle, and you say to Daughter, "Say, could you bring us some corn-beef hash?" And she looks at you like an evangelist looks at a guy that he thinks has put a lead quarter in the plate, and she says, "The hash is out."

And then you think – and you find out you ain't much of a thinker – you'll have a pork chop, or maybe a T-bone steak, or some roast beef, and then finally you says, kind of irritated, "Well, what can we get?"

"Say," she says, "don't get fresh! You can have a small steak or you can have ham and eggs – only I think the eggs is all out."

God! I've always held and maintained that America is the one and only nation that knows how to provide elegant chow, but even a patriot like me, sometimes I feel that we get this said elegant chow every place in the country except three: cities, towns, and farmhouses.

So you carry along a little stove.

And then you ought to have a windshield spotlight, and a spade, and –

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(Here, by request of the publishers, are omitted thirty-seven other articles recommended by Mr. Schmaltz. – EDITOR.)

*

Well, the first day, what with one thing and another and packing, we didn't get off till noon, having had a light lunch before starting, and

say, I could 've killed that Pole hired girl we had at that time – she cooked up some scrambled eggs and never let us know they was ready, and they was all cold, and for a fellow that likes really nice tasty grub, a cold scrambled egg isn't hardly worth eating.

But anyway, we got away at exactly three minutes after twelve – I kind of kept a schedule of our timing on this trip, and mileage, and daily consumption of oil and gas, and say, if I had my figures here, I could show you that we got more mileage on Dainty Daisy gas than on Samson, with all the Samson claims for power-plus. And as I say, we got started kind of late, and so we didn't plan to make much of a run that day, but only to Mittewoc, a hundred and seventy-five miles.

I never like to run more than two hundred and fifty miles a day. I know you don't agree with me, George, but I feel that when you run three hundred or three hundred and fifty, you don't really see all the scenery as thoroughly and study the agriculture and other features of the country as closely as you might if you just jogged along at a nice steady forty-five or fifty

miles an hour instead of speeding. But be that as it may. We planned to take it easy and not get in before seven-thirty.

Say, that day was a revelation of progress.

When I first drove that road, it was just a plain dirty road running through a lot of unkempt farms, and now every mile or so you'd find a dandy up-to-date hot-dog stand – some like log-cabins and some like Chinese pagodas or Indian wigwams or little small imitations of Mount Vernon about ten feet high, and all like that, and stocking every known refreshment for the inner man – hot dogs and apple pie and chewing-gum and cigars and so on and so forth – and of course up-to-date billboards all along the road to diversify it, and garages maybe every five miles, and in every town a dandy free auto camp providing free water and wood for the tourists. And so many of the farmers quitting their old toilsome routine and selling apples and cider to the motorists – I asked one of 'em, by the way, how he could keep his supply up, and come to find out, he didn't have an apple tree on the place – he got 'em all from a grocery store in the next town. Oh, motoring certainly has

made a great and wonderful change in the country!

We didn't have any special experiences that first day – just one or two little incidents. I remember there was a fellow, he looked like a hobo, he waved his hand and stopped us.

"Well, my friend, what do you want?" I says – he was a shabby-looking cuss.

"Could you give me a lift?" he says.

"A lift?" I says.

"Yuh, I'd like a lift," he says.

"You've got two good feet to walk on, haven't you?" I says.

"Yuh," he says, "but I'm going a long ways."

"Oh you are, are you!" I says. "Look here, my friend, let me give you a piece of advice."

"I ain't asking for advice," he says. "I'm asking for a lift."

Then of course I got a little sore, him sassing me in that uncalled-for fashion, and I says, "Well, I might 've given you a lift," I says, "if you hadn't got so fresh, but now – Well, all I can say is, if you'd buckle down to business and tend to business and earn some money," I

says, "you'd maybe have an auto of your own, and you wouldn't have to ask people for a lift. Good *day*!" I says, and I drove on. I guess maybe that taught him a lesson. "You buckle down to work and not waste time asking for a lift," I told him, "and maybe you'll have an auto of your own!"

Then we stopped in a little burg – awful little hick hamlet it was; called, if I remember rightly, New Paris; and we stopped for an ice-cream soda, and when I was parking, I bumped just the least little bit into the car ahead of me. Didn't hurt him one little bit, and just bent my bumper a little, but my God, to hear the other fellow squeal about it, you'd 've thought I'd smashed his car to pieces and killed his Aunt Jenny. Great big rube he was – fellow with no dignity.

Even though I was born and brought up a city man, I admire the farmer and honour his efforts. What, after all, would we do without wheat and corn and flax and barley and radishes and so on? But same time, a lot of those hicks have no manners or dignity. Like this fellow.

He rushed right across the sidewalk from

where he'd been putting in the afternoon holding up the front of the Red Ball Grocery Store, I remember it was – and say, that's one of the best chains of grocery stores in the country – and he bawls:

"Hey, you hit my car!"

"I'm quite aware of the fact," I says, coldly – the big tramp! – if he thought he could frighten *me*! And so I got out, and looked things over, and I'd just bumped his spare tyre, on the back, the least little bit.

"Well, what are you going to do about it?" he says.

"What am I going to do about it?" I says.

"Yes, what're you going to do about it?"

"Well, inasmuch and considering as I haven't perpetrated the least damage," I informed him, "it strikes me that probably I'm not going to do anything about it."

"We'll see about that!" he says.

"We certainly will!" I says. "You can call the officers of the law," I says, "and we'll see how they'll adjust matters. And I might just call to your attention the fact that you're not parked at the requisite and regulation angle," I

says, "and we'll see what the authorities have to say about *that*!"

Well, of course I was pulling an awful bluff. I didn't know what the parking regulations were, at all. But then I figured that probably he didn't, either! And of course I knew that if he did call the constabule, by heck, he'd do a lot of lying and falsifying and all those kind of things that make you so sick when you're dealing with a roughneck. But then, I was all prepared for him – I figured that I'd tell the cop I was a big city lawyer and knew more about motor law than anybody since God was a boy, and bluff him out.

And say, it worked like a charm!

This fellow positively got white.

"Well, you ought to be careful," he grumbles – you'd 've died to see him trying to crawl out of it – and say, that ended the whole matter.

And what I didn't tell him, and what I didn't feel called on to tell him, if he couldn't see it himself, was that the way I'd hit his spare tyre – something stuck out and I'd smashed hell out of his valve stem, so when Mr. Farmer come to put it on, he'd have one fine awful time, and served

him right for the way he'd talked to me – say, many's the time I've laughed when I thought about that poor hick, 'way off seventeen miles from Nowhere, with a puncture, starting to put on this tyre!

So Mame and I went into the drug-store and I had a strawberry ice-cream soda, and she, if I remember rightly – correct me, Mame, if I'm wrong – she had a lemon phosphate, and then we drove to the nearest garage, and I had my bumper straightened.

That was a nice garage, too, for such a tiny little burg.

I drove up and tooted my horn, and out come a young fellow in overalls, and I said, "Say, Cap'n, I hit a mosquito up the road a piece, and I wonder if you could straighten my bumper."

"Sure," he says.

"Could you do it right away?" I says. "I've got a date up the road to meet Gertrude Ederle and swim across the Channel with her."

"Sure," he says. You could see (my God, think of what it must mean to live in a hog-wallow like that and not hardly ever meet any

educated people except when they stopped like I did!) – you could see he appreciated a little real Kiwanis Club kidding.

And so he got busy, and say, with a jack he had that bumper straightened in about ten seconds, and so we drove on.

And those were about all the interesting incidents, and considering I want to get on and outline the whole itinerary for you –

Oh, there was one little thing.

We stopped at a farmhouse for a drink of water – not water for the radiator, you understand; isn't it one of the wonders of modern science the way the radiator of a really fine car don't hardly need refilling at all? – I mean just for some water to drink. Well, I went up to the front door, and some old hag of a farm-wife came to the door, and I took off my hat, just as polite as if she was an important customer in my store, and I says to her, "Madam, I wonder if my wife and I can trouble you for a drink of water."

Well, she stands there and looks at me – by golly, I got kind of irritated, discourtesy like that to a wayfarer – and she looks at me and she says, "You're the sixteenth autoist to-day that's

stopped and asked for a drink of water. And every time I've gone 'way down by the barn, to the pump, and brought it. And the last person, and she called herself a lady, kicked like all get out because she didn't think the glass I brought her was clean enough. And all I have to do is to cook and bake and sweep and mend and do for four men, and tend the chickens, and hoe the garden, and help milk the cows. And I'm getting tired of being a free waitress for city autoists on top of that!"

Well, there may have been a certain modicum of reason to what she said.

I tell you, George, I'm always the first to open my heart and purse-strings to the call of the poor and needy. Why say, here just a couple of months ago, we took up a collection at the Kiwanis Club to buy a newsboy a suit of clothes. But same *time* –

Why do these hicks insist on giving themselves away? Why can't they try to learn nice manners, like you and I do?

What I'd 've liked to do was to give her one quick wallop on the jaw, but I just raised my hat again, like I was the Beau of Brummel, and I

says, "I am very sorry to have bothered you, madam! Good *afternoon*!"

And I marched off and never looked back once! I'll bet she felt ashamed, and I hope to God she did!

*

Along about five we stopped to get some hot dogs and sauerkraut and coffee at a mighty nice little burg, right up to date, all brick pavement and snappy little bungalows and a lovely movie palace and a new brick armoury and one of the highest water-towers we saw on the whole trip and a dandy cigar-store called "The Hang-out," and important industrially, too – big cheese factory and a rubber factory – place I'd always wanted to see and had heard a lot about – it was called Carcassonne.

And then we hiked on, and we got to Mittewoc at 7.13 on the dot.

And then, if I can just get Mame to admit it, we had the father and mother of a row about where we were going to stay that night.

There was a nice hotel there – the Ishpeming Arms – nice big clean lobby with elegant deep leather rocking-chairs, and the brass spit-

toons shined up like they were tableware – and Mame thought we ought to go there.

But I says to her, "It isn't a question of money," I says, "I guess I can afford the best hotels about as well as the next fellow. But it never *hurts* to save a little money; and besides," I says, "it's half the fun, as well as information, of a trip like this to get right down among the common, ordinary folks that ride in flivvers," I said, "and I've heard they've got a dandy tourist auto camp here, camping and parking space free, and with cottages with bedclothes, at a dollar a night," I said, "and I vote we try it once, and brush up against the common people, and if we don't like it to-night," I says, "we don't need to try it again."

Well, we argued a lot, but Mame is a mighty good little sport, if she'll let me say so in her presence, and make a long story short, we drove over to the tourist park.

Well, sir, it was as pretty a place and fixed up as swell as you'd want to see anywheres. It was right on the bank of the Appleseed River, and there was several nice willow trees scattered through the grounds, and even, if I remember

rightly – correct me if I'm wrong, Mame – there was a nice big oak tree. Of course the grounds were just the least little bit dirty, but what could you expect, with forty to sixty people camping there every night?

They had a dandy little store, painted in an art yellow with a mighty artistic sign, "Ye Olde Autoists' General Store," that, say, that place had every want and necessity for a touring party, even with kids along. They carried tyres and canvas water buckets and gas and canned goods and diapers and lollypops and cotton gloves and maps and magazines and near-beer and everything you could think of.

Then there was a lot of marked-out spaces for cars and for tents, for those that carried tents, and a nice line of outdoor ovens with plenty of wood provided free, and dandy shower baths in tents, and finally about half a dozen cottages for them that didn't carry tents, and we got one. And for a dollar, say, it wasn't so bad – it had a double bed with nice clean linen, and a chair.

So we settled down, and I says to Mame, "Let's make out like we're just tourists, without

a bean to our names," and she entered right into the spirit of the thing, and we bought a frying-pan and a stew-pan at the store, and some canned stuff, and we had a dandy little supper, cooked by Mame's own fair hands – canned vegetable soup, and canned wienies (say, did you ever know that wienies are named after Ween, a German city?), and fried potatoes, and to top it off, some chocolate-almond bars.

Well, some of the folks had started a big camp-fire, and we all sat around it, just like one big family, and we sang a lot of old-time songs – and what I always say is, these modern songs haven't got the melody and sentiment like those old ancient songs have – we sang "After the Ball," and "Daisy, Daisy, Gimme Your Answer True," and "Onward, Christian Soldiers," and "Toy Land," and "Two Little Girls in Blue," and all like that.

And I got to talking with a lot of different folks, and say, hardly more'n forty per cent. were up to the Chevrolet class, and yet they were as fine a bunch of folks as you'd want to meet – I mean, just to idle a few hours away with. And I learned a lot of different facts that

I hadn't known before – say, there's certainly nothing that broadens a fellow like travelling.

Just for an example, I learned that Chattanooga, Tennessee – or it might 've been Nashville – but anyway it's right on a fine river, and you can see the mountains from there. And I learned that the largest Presbyterian church in the country was in Seattle, Washington. And I learned that Zion City, Illinois – or is it Wisconsin? – this old hang-out of Dowie[1] – has not only a very large lace factory, which of course everybody knows, but also one of the largest biscuit factories in the country. And I learned from a gentleman who was a veterinarian that one of the best foods for dogs was cornmeal mush cooked up with slivers of meat, thus making what they call a balanced ration – for dogs, I mean.

And say, that was a mighty funny thing. This veterinarian, Dr. Lepewski, his name was, but he explained he was really of German extrac-

[1] The patron saint and model for such organizations as the Anti-Saloon League and the Lord's Day Alliance. Like Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy, he preached Divine Healing of all ills until his unfortunate death.

tion and not one of these Lithuanians or some foreign stock like that, he happened to mention that about a year ago, or it might have been longer than that – this Dr. Lepewski, I may say, wasn't any of your tin-can flivver tourists, in fact he was driving an Oakland, and a high-class gentleman in every way, and I guess he was just staying at the tourist camp for the fun of the adventure, like Mame and me – and he said he was in Chicago, here about a year or so ago, in a hotel – I think it was the La-Salle, but it may have been some other hotel – and he ran into – I'd just happened to mention that I came from Zenith, and he said that in this hotel he happened to run into a gentleman from Zenith.

Well, naturally, I was interested right away, and I said to him, "What was this gentleman's name?"

"Well, if I remember rightly," he said to me, "his name was Claude Bundy – in the sash and blind business. Do you happen to know him?"

"Well sir," I says to the doctor, "can you beat that? Say, it's a pretty doggone small world

after all, isn't it! No, I don't happen to know Claude himself, but several times I've met his cousin, Victor Bundy, the lawyer," I said, "and I imagine I must know several people who've known Claude!"

So that's how it went – a mighty profitable as well as pleasant evening, and Mame and I turned in and hit the hay sometime along about a quarter to eleven, and we slept pretty good, and next morning we rolled out about seven and got some breakfast at a little lunch-counter near there –

Eh?

My Lord, you're right, Mame!

It's eleven-fifteen, and we'll have to be trotting along home, and I haven't even completed my account of the trip as far as the Black Hills. Well, I'll tell you, George; we'll get together again soon, and I can tell you the rest in half an hour.

I've enjoyed the evening a whole lot, and I hope what I've told you may be helpful –

And oh, there is one thing I *must* say before we skip. Be sure and carry along a drinking cup. Now there's various kinds. You can get a

small glass in a metal case, or one of these folding metal cups, or just a plain enamel-ware cup. Now let me tell you in just a brief word my experience with each of these –

PART VI

THE BASIC AND FUNDAMENTAL IDEALS OF CHRISTIAN AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP

MR. CHAIRMAN, reverend sirs, and friends and brothers of the Men's Club of the Pilgrim Congregational Church:

It is difficult for me to express the pleasure and honour I feel in being thus called on as your speaker. There is no organization in which I have taken a greater pleasure in belonging to. While it is true that, due to the pressure of my Americanization work and other duties, I have not been able to attend the monthly Get-Together Supper and Talk as often as I would like, let me assure you that it has been with a pang that I have missed every supper that I have missed.

I've always been a great believer in what the Great Bard says: "Brevity is the soul of wit," and I could almost express everything I want to say to you in the song in which Bert Hubbard has so dramatically led us:

For your friends are my friends,
And my friends are your friends,
And the more we get together,
The happier we'll be.

Let me first of all say that I agree most heartily with our chairman that it is the greatest conceivable pleasure and honour to have with us this evening not only Dr. Edwards, our most honoured pastor, but also Dr. Otto Hickenlooper of Central Methodist Church, and Dr. Elmer Gantry, formerly of Wellspring Methodist but now so gloriously located in New York, and I want to most heartily and enthusiastically join our honoured chairman and our beloved pastor in welcoming these clerical gentlemen among us.

Whatever slight doctrinal, if I may call them so, differences there may exist between the Methodists and we Congregationalists, there is no difference in our aims, and I'm sure that no Methodist could appreciate and honour Dr. Gantry and Dr. Hickenlooper more than we do.

I doubt if anywheres in the whole length and

breadth of the land could be found dominies with more eloquence, more active devotion to institutional Christianity, more exemplary and devotional lives, and more courageous and scholarly devotion to the exact truth than these two gentlemen, and while they come here to-night without any preacher's vests or turned-around collars, yet let us remember that however influential we business men may be in economic affairs, it is thinkers like Dr. Gantry, Dr. Hickenlooper, and Dr. Edwards who finally determine our philosophy, our ideals, our judgment in literary and artistic matters, and our ethics in business – and that they will continue so to control us, thank God, no matter what libellous and lying attacks may be made upon them by disgruntled ignoramuses who try to get a little cheap notoriety by questioning their characters!

I will no further refer to certain filthy books and sheets and publications, that love to wallow in filth and to sell their souls for a few pitiful pennies, and I will answer them by saying that these great ministers of the gospel have – and their detractors can take it or leave it – these

renowned pastors have the spiritual sanction and financial support of every man like Lowell Schmaltz!

*

I've wondered sometimes since I chose the title of this brief and modest talk that I propose to make – "The Basic and Fundamental Ideals of Christian American Citizenship" – if it may not sound a little too highfalutin. It isn't intended to be. I merely want to outline in a simple way the ethics of the New Generation – of the New American Era.

In the old days, preachers were just interested in a lot of confused theories; now they are as practical and as hail-fellow-well-met as any business man. In the old days, business men – the men who produce and sell the conveniences which make life what it is to-day – were scared of and let themselves be influenced by a lot of kings, lords, generals, journalists, judges, and a lot of impractical people like that.

But now the New Era has come. Now we can breathe a sigh of relief that the old-fashioned aristocratic and leisurely nonsense is over, and that we live in an age dominated by Henry

Ford, Woolworth, Marshall Field, Crane, Andrew Mellon, Cyrus H. K. Curtis, Pillsbury, Ward the titanic baker, the founders of the A. & P. groceries, of the United Cigar Stores, and of the Liggett and Owl Drug-Stores, Statler, John D. Rockefeller, William Randolph Hearst, Hart, Schaffner and Marx, Charles Schwab, Heinz of the fifty-seven, Swift and Armour, the McCormick harvester family, and such other rulers of modern industry and commerce – the new princes, the new high priests, the creators and protectors of a new philosophy and a new art.

I yield to no one in my admiration for the America of Abraham Lincoln, Emerson, Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne. But those gentlemen lived too early to conceive on the one hand of a nation of a hundred and ten million people, imposing its ideals and rule on the whole world, and on the other hand of standards of living in which the radio replaces the parlour organ, an electric lamp with an art shade replaces the old oil light, and a magazine with two million circulation replaces some old dusty calf-bound book.

If they lived to-day, they would be heart and soul with us of the New Era. I can see Lincoln as the president of United States Steel, of the Paramount Film Company, or the Wrigley Gum Company; I can see Poe as one of the leading writers for the *Red Book*; Emerson as president of Columbia or the University of Illinois, inspiring twenty thousand students with his eloquence; and Hawthorne writing ads for the new model Hupmobile.

But the ethics of this New Era are not yet entirely figured out, and I want, in my tiny and humble way, to contribute what I can to them this evening.

*

Certain ideals are universal – honesty, chastity, and not boozing too much. But there are two principles almost entirely developed by and peculiar to America of to-day, and these are *Service* and *Practicalness*! (Or some call it Practicality.)

Now let us take Service. Let me start out by defining what I mean by it.

Service is imagination. Service is that something extra, aside from the mere buying, stock-

ing, and delivery of goods, that so tickles the comfort and self-esteem of a customer that he will feel friendly and come back for more. Service is, in fact, the poetry, the swell manners, the high adventure of business.

And this is the first time in history that a nation has conceived the massive, the daring and glittering idea, that you can do more than just sell the customer the goods he wants – that you can, in fact, tie him to you by that subtle form of friendliness known as Service, so that, without its really costing you much of anything, you can make him feel that he's getting double value for his money.

Service! If the Rotarians and Kiwanians had done nothing else, they would have justified themselves and made their place secure in history for all time by their insistence on the value and beauty – the, in fact, if I may without sacrilege say so, *religion* of Service.

Let me give you a few examples of what I have known done or have fancied might be done in the way of Service.

Take my own profession, office supplies.

Say I sell a fellow an adding-machine. Now

there's nothing about the operation of it that any bright girl couldn't learn in half an hour, and as to repairs, of course no sensible office ever monkeys with them, anyway. But when a gentleman buys an adding-machine, I ask him to send the girl who's going to operate it around for a course of lessons – of course absolutely free. Then once a week for a month I send a fellow to the office to look over the adding-machine, to adjust it, and to give further instruction in its use to anyone who the boss may designate – again all absolutely free.

Now probably the fellow I send around doesn't know any more about running the ole adding-machine than half the folks in the office, but that isn't the point. The point is that I thus establish in the bosses of that office a feeling of co-operation with me, a feeling of my eagerness to give good measure, pressed down and running over, as the Good Book says, and then when he wants anything further in the way of office supplies, he's the more likely to turn to me. That's Service!

Or take insurance.

In the old days, when a bird – when a solici-

tor had sold somebody a policy, that ended it, and the solicitor never bothered him again. But happily a more scientific era has dawned. To the really enlightened solicitor, the sale of the first policy is merely the beginning. With an air of impersonal friendliness, and with an especial care to not seem obtrusive, the solicitor makes this customer his buddy for life.

He keeps a file of newspaper clippings showing every move of his customer – say like death in the customer's family, his election to some high position in a lodge, or his wife giving a dinner to Soroptimist delegates – and on every such occasion he expresses to the customer his congratulations. Or condolences, as the case may be.

Of course this has to be done with care. The solicitor must make sure whether the customer dislikes being bothered or not. If not, he makes these approaches in a nice, friendly, chatty, gentlemanly telephone conversation, working in also some reference to the weather or the World's Series – but never, you understand, directly mentioning business, for otherwise it would not be Service. But if the fellow is touchy and

irritable, the solicitor contents himself with nice formal little letters, perhaps suggesting that no reply or acknowledgment is needed.

Then finally, when he feels the prospect is ripe, when a really rich feeling of personal friendship has grown up between them, he makes a quick hard touch, and in a surprising number of cases is able to put over a new and larger policy on him.

That's Service – and, like Virtue, it brings its reward.

And so in other businesses. The grocery customer will often prefer a second-rate apple in a handsome wrapper to a first-rate one carelessly bundled in plain tissue paper. A motorist will stand for pretty bad gasoline if the gas-station employees wear handsome uniforms, greet the customer respectfully, and wipe off his windshield free. A man will often put up with small rooms, high prices, and even pretty poor food if both the reception clerk and the manager treat him like a friend, give him a warm handshake, and, this most especially, learn his name thoroughly and greet him by it when he returns a second time.

That's Service!

And remember that only a low and sordid commercialist would look on it as something which merely sells more goods – though it certainly does that, too. But over and above that, it promotes friendliness, good fellowship, brotherhood, and thus makes for the millennial day when all the world shall be one happy Christian fellowship.

*

And now the second peculiarly modern and American ideal – practicalness.

Europe has always had its art, its beauty, but where we have gone beyond the Old Country is that while we want things beautiful – take like an elegant new gas stove– they must primarily be of *use*. Let me prove my point by going right into the world of professional art and sculpture.

When a European city wants to adorn itself, it puts up, if I may judge from a rather wide reading, and a study of the pictures in the *National Geographic Magazine* – it puts up in its parks a lot of heathen goddesses – which are rather suggestive, to say the least – along with

fountains and such things. But we – Well, we want to decorate a park, and we decide on a statue at once handsome and educative. We figure there's a lot of Spaniards in the city that'll be pleased by recognition, so we put up a fine bust of Columbus; or we see there's a bunch of naturalized Italians, with perfectly good votes, and we recognize them by erecting a monument to – to – well, to Dante. Or we please the Germans by a bust of Gerty. And so we kill two birds with one stone.

Or take a more immediate example. Now that Christmas is not long over, I guess there's some of us that feel the gift business is a little overdone. I have heard gentlemen of my own acquaintanceship assert that they felt certain department stores almost commercialize the sacred holiday. But be that as it may, and it is too involved a question for me to go into it on the present occasion, it is an encouraging and outstanding fact that year by year gifts tend to become more *practical.*

I have here a magazine published early in December, and therefore largely devoted to advertisements with the rosy blush of the

holidays upon them. And there in the old times there would have been an emphasis on impractical things for Christmas – say like books, etchings, and fancy smoking-jackets – what do we find now?

First of all, of course, there are many suggestions for auto accessories as Christmas gifts, as is suitable in a country where the chief object is to go somewhere quick. Fine! Tyre chains, tyre locks, radiator shutters, moto-meters, and anti-freeze mixtures done up in handsome holly-decorated cans especially for Christmas.

And then the other practical gifts, suitable to gladden the heart of any recipient: pocket cigar-lighters, sharpeners for safety razor blades, little scales suitable for the bathroom so that every one, man, lady, or child, can daily check up on his health. And what toys! Real electric trains, just like the real article, so that the fortunate child who gets one for Christmas doesn't have to do a thing but press a lever and the train goes by itself, and the child can just sit there and watch it and enjoy himself. What fun!

And all these gift articles mingled in the

advertisements with the customary vast store of such other luxuries as only America produces. Ads of towns in Florida that in less than ten years have come in every way to equal if not surpass Venice, Italy. These wonderful new ladies' overshoes with this business, I forget what it's called, but you just pull a business, and the whole business slides open without buttons or hooks and eyes. Splendid ads of sauerkraut, which thus, nationally advertised, rises from its lowly status and takes its place alongside of candy and the telephone company.

And then this:

Here till just recently both typewriters and fountain pens were always in a dull and I might almost say sombre black. But now typewriters are appearing in a variety of lovely colours, suitable to the boudoir as well as the office; and as for your fountain pen, you can have it in opal, lettuce green, dawn pink, elephant-hide grey, La Marquis blue, or any other of a dozen tempting hues and shades.

But in this magazine I found an even greater proof of the way in which America combines beauty with sheer practicalness. One adver-

tisement starts out with a letter – I suppose it is imaginary, the product of some copy-writer's genius, and yet in this New Era it might quite possibly be real – from a young lady who's supposed to be writing to her beau, and she says:

"You are thinking of me, Sweetheart. Even as I am thinking of you. Thinking . . . wondering . . . cherishing each precious hour of anticipation . . . counting the days until . . .

"And Christmas is almost here. Perhaps you are thinking of a gift for me. Possibly a jewel! Yet no greater jewel will I ever crave than that of your perfect companionship; nor gift would I ask more royal than the honesty of your own heart.

"Let your gift to me be something intimate . . . beautiful . . . reminiscent always of the Dream Days of Now.

"And I ask you . . . let it be practical!

"Sanctuary for the lovely silks and linens and embroidery I am receiving . . . for the wool blankets . . . downy comforters . . . for those precious possessions which I now hoard away in

closet, trunk, or bureau drawer. A place of beauty and fragrance, of convenience and safety, where moth and dust will not corrupt nor inquisitive fingers delve . . . it is of this I whisper, beloved . . .

"Something I have always longed for – that every woman has longed for. Something a girl would so gladly have from her sweetheart . . . or her husband. A CEDAR CHEST . . ."

Then the advertisement goes on to show pictures of the manufacturer's line of cedar chests. And I want to tell you gentlemen that when we have reached a point in American advertising where we can combine straight selling-talk with not only the joyous spirit of the holiday season, but also the most delicate intimacies of young love, and also a cleverly worked-in quotation from Holy Writ, then by thunder we have reached a point of practicalness never hitherto known in history!

At last has come the glorious era when every noble sentiment, every artistic turn of phrase and elegant wording, every instinct of beauty, is no longer forced to run alone and maverick,

but can rejoicingly take its proper place in serving commerce and the merchant kings!

Or one more example, which I take from another magazine of the same festal date, about the practical drink for the Christmas feed. Now Germany may have its beer, France may rejoice in its ruby wine, England may have its – its variety of drinks, but we, thank God, have freed ourselves from the dreadful thraldom of alcohol!

And why? Because we find that for business success alcohol ain't *practical*! And yet we find ourselves wishing to acknowledge the great feast days with suitable vintages. And so our manufacturers rush in and perfectly fill the gap in an entirely satisfactory manner. Listen to this ad, and note the high-class literary wording:

"A right merrie drink to add new zest to a well-cooked Christmas dinner . . . The majestic turkey has replaced the historic boar's head; the gaily bedecked peacock pie has given way to mince; a fine old ginger ale has taken the place of the flowing Wassail Bowl which

once was passed from hand to hand as "the ancient fountain of good feeling where all hearts met together."

In all the world, there is no beverage so appropriate for the Christmas dinner as XXXX Ginger Ale! Served in fragile stemware, it gleams and sparkles like a rare old wine and bids you drink and be merry! Dinner always takes on a new zest, a new distinction when this fine old ginger ale comes to grace your table."

There, gentlemen, is our ringing answer to the opponents of prohibition!

*

What opportunity in this new and increasingly practical America for any bright fellow to-day!

Take like Al Smith. Here is a poor boy of the city streets, and a Catholic, and yet we have permitted him to be Governor of New York. Naturally I'm opposed to his being President, but I've been perfectly willing to see him rise as far as he has, and while he's almost certainly never heard of me, if he were here I'd be glad

to give him the hand and good wishes of Lowell Schmaltz!

What opportunity to-day! What co-operation!

You take, for example, the Community Chest. What a colossal and unique American institution that is – all of us combining on every worthy charity, and refusing to support those institutions which our bankers and other experts consider unworthy. Why, just this last fall –

There was a young man in the office of a friend of mine who refused to contribute one red cent to the Community Chest, on the frivolous and indeed almost flippant grounds that the big men behind the campaign for funds – the men who were themselves often the most generous givers! – used their large contributions as a club with which to keep all radical and wrong-thinking charity-workers out of jobs with the various institutions.

So my friend very properly fired this sore-head and quietly passed the word around, and this young man – as you can see, practically a socialist in disguise – Well, I shall be very much

surprised if he ever finds it possible to get another decent job in this man's town! I give that just as an example of the way in which, with the increasingly solid American organization, we can on the one hand assist the aspiring and right-thinking young crusader, and on the other hand get rid of all anarchists and hammer-wielders.

For we must never forget that even in the midst of this, the most luxurious and powerful civilization the world has ever known, there are always people who, for some insane reason that they themselves couldn't explain, still criticize and complain and refuse to climb on the band wagon.

You take this.

I am reliably informed – though certainly I have not sullied my self-respect by reading any of them, but I have been informed of their contents by criticisms given in various sermons – I am informed that during this last year or so there have been published two books purporting to show that George Washington was not the great hero we all know him to be but a man that smoked, drank, used bad language, and

flirted. Then there was an alleged biography claiming that Henry Ward Beecher was not what we all know him to have been – the greatest preacher and power for righteousness since Martin Luther, and a man of spotless righteousness and truth – but instead a man whose word and loving friendliness could not be relied on. And no less than three disgraceful books, two of them novels and one a screed by a woman claiming to have known him too intimately, have dared to hint that our Martyr President, Harding himself, was a dumb-bell surrounded by crooks.

Well, I've got an answer for all these authorial gentlemen!

And my answer is that it is not worth the while of a serious and busy man of affairs to pay the slightest attention to notoriety-hunting hacks, who creep out of their fetid holes to bay the moon, who seek by their filthy and lying accusations to keep a foothold in the public eye!

*

I see that my allotted time is drawing to a close, but, though it does not strictly belong to my topic, I want to take this opportunity to

tell you briefly something of my conversation several months ago with President Coolidge, who was, as many of you may know, a great chum of mine all through our college days.

When I arrived at the White House, the President was just going off on the *Mayflower* with the British ambassador, as I had failed to apprise him of my coming sufficiently in advance. So we had a shorter visit than usual, but he spoke of certain things on which I know you will be glad to get authoritative information.

"Mr. President," I said – he had indicated that he wanted me to call him "Cal," but I didn't feel it to be fitting – "Mr. President," I said, "how do you feel about this question of decreasing our navy?"

"Well, Low," he said, "I think I can put it to you in just a few words. While of course he is thrice armed that is prepared, as the bard says, yet navies cost a deplorable amount of money, and I should be glad to see them reduced – so far as it is safe."

"Well, how do you feel about taxation?" I said.

"In my opinion," he said, "while there should never be such unjust taxes that the burden of taxation shall fall unduly on those that are compelled to carry on great commercial enterprises, which give jobs to all sorts and conditions of men, yet equally there must never be an intolerable assessment against those that for one reason or another are not well off in this world's goods."

"And finally," I said, "if you wouldn't be betraying any state secrets – I should never ask you to do that, even though we are old friends," I said – "what do you think about the situation in China?"

I shall never forget how he straightened up and his eyes flashed fire, as he shot back at me, grimly:

"In my opinion," he said, "there is now arising a situation where it is necessary to do more than merely our obvious duty in safeguarding American rights and properties in China. It is the last desire of myself or of my advisers to involve ourselves in European politics," he said, "but I stand up and say before the world that we do not like the way in

which, it is alleged, the Bolsheviks tend to encourage the Chinese to act in an uncivilized manner; and when the proper time comes we shall, if necessary, take whatever action may be necessary."

*

So there, gentlemen, you have in the President's own words a clear statement of our foreign policy. Yet to me it is no more remarkable, no more worthy of historical reading, than our domestic policy, as to Service and Practicalness, which I have just tried to outline.

And I shall be glad if in my small way I have done anything to make clearer to you the New Era of American Civilization; to express modestly the motto of Lowell Schmaltz: "Read widely, think scientifically, speak briefly, and sell the goods!"

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